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IN THE TABLOID: MUSIC

OUT OF
THE ASHES
OF NIRVANA

Who needs a second car?

Prescott plans to cut traffic pollution and switch lorry loads onto trains

Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

John Prescott yesterday weighed in on the side of buses and trains, and proudly forecast the end of the multi-car family, saying that having two cars in the drive was due to the "failure of public transport system" - and not a status symbol. "People will realise that they will not need two cars - and pay for two sets of tax discs and two insurance policies - because public transport will get them there," the Deputy Prime Minister said yesterday. Announcing the Government's proposals for an integrated transport policy, Mr Prescott made it clear that he was determined to unclog Britain's road network. Buses, trains and trams should be an alternative for motorists and meet the needs of the "third of the population that do not have access to a car".

There were some new initiatives in the consultation document he presented. Railtrack, which owns the nation's stations and signalling, is preparing a study into an orbital rail system around London. Lorries from the main ports would drop their loads on to freight trains which would carry containers into and around the city before continuing northwards on the East and West Coast Lines to the north. This, ministers believe, would reduce road freight considerably, in particular on the M25. Mr Prescott did not rule out fiscal measures to price people out of cars. The consultation paper invites views on congestion charging, increasing parking rates and taxing company cars more heavily. This is only half the battle - he would need to convince the Treasury that money collected from motorists needed to be recycled into public transport.

Mr Prescott, who runs the De-

partment of Environment, Transport and the Regions, also risked the wrath of his Cabinet rival, the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, by saying that London Underground needed £1bn to meet its investment needs, and added that he favoured changing Treasury rules in order to get it. "I think we could be a bit more adventurous change the Treasury rules to allow public bodies to borrow... like they do in Europe".

Stressing that driving a car would not become an offence, he urged British motorists to follow the lead of continental Europeans, who have higher rates of car ownership but use their vehicles less.

When asked whether he thought the Parisian initiative to cut ticket prices in half on public transport in order to reduce pollution could be emulated in Britain, he replied that London Underground would not have the capacity to cope.

Pressed by reporters about a mythical man living in Bodmin, who had only a "second-class road network, a third-class railway and no buses", Mr Prescott grew clearly exasperated. "I am not going to suggest he gives up his car if that is all he's got, am I?"

But the consultation document got a distinctly frosty reception from transport and green groups.

The Retail Motor Industry Federation, the body that represents car dealerships, issued a press release headed: "Prescott's glib solutions not the answer".

Motoring organisations disagreed. Both the AA and the RAC welcomed the document, but both stressed that getting "proper funding" was the key. "Mr Prescott should stop prevaricating," said a spokesman from Friends of the Earth. "And instead should get on with funding quick, cheap measures like traffic calming, bus lanes and cycle routes."

Letters, page 17



Left turning: One of John Prescott's aims is to benefit the third of the population who do not have access to a car Photograph: John Lawrence

Reports of a death may be premature

From Our Wrong
Correspondent...

Annabel Freyberg (Deputy Obituaries
Editor) watched John Prescott announce
the demise (he hopes) of the traffic jam

The long-awaited death of the old transport system will mark the end of a number of cherished British institutions: traffic jams, polluted air and excessive bus queues to name but a few. Still, it hasn't quite come to that yet.

Yesterday's consultation document was launched by the tough-talking, if sometimes jovial Deputy Prime Minister John Leslie Prescott (born Prestatyn, North Wales 31 May 1938), aided by Gavin Steel Strang (born Dundee 10 July 1943) and Michael Hugh Meacher (born Hemel Hempstead 4 November 1939). All looked disappointingly robust,

though Strang spent most of the meeting gazing disconsolately into the distance. There was no disguising it. This was a wake. Ever since William Huskisson MP was mown down by a train at the opening of the

Manchester and Liverpool Railway in 1825, there has been a deliciously dangerous frisson when ministers play with new forms of transport. The signs were excellent. The room where the conference was held was tomb-

like - windowless and painted an noisily shade of grey.

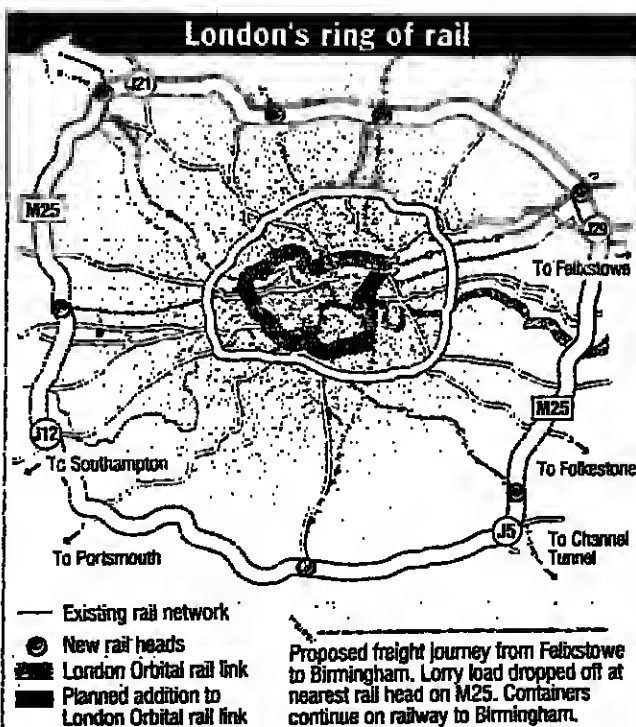
Prescott (educated Ellesmere Port Secondary Modern School, Ruskin College, Oxford and Hull University) spoke proudly of his encounter with a C2 bus earlier in the day.

"There has been a sea-change in public opinion," he intoned, referring to his time on the ocean wave (Steward, Passenger Lines, Merchant Navy 1955-63), and then he was off at express-train rate, rattling but not rattled, never glancing at his notes, reaching for yet more upbeat words - integration, improvements, holistic.

Jeers and counter-attacks by heartless journalists were parried with a smile. Prescott (married 1961 Pauline Tilston; two sons) spoke movingly of his honeymoon period, of how in 17 weeks Labour had had more success in pushing Transport forward than the Tories in 18 years.

As he bounded along, punching out challenging ideas, I found myself wondering: how long can this man last? In his current role that is. Certainly all he has rung the death knell for over-dependence on cars.

The traffic jam, travellers' scourge: born Western world, early 20th century; died, hope-fully, end 20th century.



Pupils break records with thirteen As and a string of stars

Judith Judd
Education Editor

Records tumbled yesterday as nearly 600,000 GCSE candidates celebrated or sobbed over their exam results. John Chapman and Garry Florence from the same Gateshead school scored 13 grade As - seven each at A* - thought to be the highest-ever number of As at GCSE. For Heather Florence, Garry's mother, who left school at 15 and is now a directory inquiries operator, his success was "quite frightening". She said: "We are just ordinary working-class people. I can't believe it. I am on cloud nine. I knew he had worked really hard, but I didn't expect this. He is just a normal boy, he is football-mad and supports Manchester United."

Both boys attend Emmanuel City Technology College, where teachers said that Garry had been in middle-ability sets when he started secondary school but had forged ahead in the last two years.

John, who has just qualified as a lifeguard, said he was surprised to do so well because the exams were much harder than the "mock" exams, particularly the German.

The last time a candidate scored 13 A grades in a 16-plus exam at a single sitting was in 1975 in the old O-level.

In Birmingham, a girl who sometimes cannot even hold a pen because of a nerve problem in her arms heard that she had ten A* grades. McQueen Ali, aged 16, a pupil at King Edward VI Handsworth Grammar, was allowed to use a computer for

her exams because she finds writing so painful. The disorder, which has baffled doctors, also causes migraines.

She said: "The computer kept crashing during the exams. It froze during both Latin exams, both religious studies exams and three English exams and I had to repeat what I'd already done."

In Somerset, Arthur Lovell, a pupil at Whitstone Community School in Shepton Mallett, scored 12 A*s. Arthur is the eldest of six children, and his family has no television. Besides his academic prowess, he also plays the violin in Somerset County Youth Orchestra and is painting a mural on a school wall.

Seven-year-old Nisha Santhiraj from north London became the youngest person to pass a GCSE when she



Celebration: Jenine Harborne (right) of Withington Girls' School Manchester, who got nine A grades in her GCSEs

achieved grade C in computing studies. Two 11-year-olds from Grove primary school, Birmingham passed maths with C grades. The school pointed out that neither had secured the top grade in the 11-year-old national tests, suggesting a mismatch between the two exams.

Andrew Watford's delight at his nine As, six at A*, was mixed with sadness. His father died just three days before the exams but he had placed a £50 bet on the results. Yesterday, the family picked up his winnings of £450. Dawn rush, page 3
Leading article, page 17

Jockey beats a chauvinist handicap

Greg Wood

You need a racing brain to be a top Flat jockey, and an intuitive understanding of racehorses, and pin-sharp judgement of pace and positioning. You also need to weigh about eight stone.

You do not need in unusual abundance raw physical strength, and yet, until yesterday, no woman jockey had ever won one of the dozen or top flight races.

For 29-year-old Alex

Greaves, a shared dead-heat victory in the Nunthorpe Stakes at York was her reward for years of hard graft.

As an apprentice rider almost a decade ago, she rode so many winners at one small Midlands track that she earned the name the "Queen of Southwell". Yet even this was a barbed comment - it might just as well have been "The Queen of Nowhere". And that, despite important winners like Amenable in the Lincoln Handicap, was often where her career appeared to be heading.

But if a woman was ever going to break through the chauvinism among trainers and owners which generally smothered their careers before they have even begun, it was always likely to be Ms Greaves.

It is no coincidence that Ya Malak, her winning mount yesterday, is trained by David Nicholls, her husband. A former jockey himself, he admits that during his own days in the saddle, his opinion of female riders was less than flattering. Attitudes may now be changing,

but racing is generally at least 20 years behind the times. It is only 31 years, for instance, since the Jockey Club agreed to issue training licences to women.

If chauvinism is receding, it is doing so far too slowly to benefit Greaves, or probably the next three or four generations of talented women riders. Every positive step is a cause for celebration, however, and she has done the cause of Britain's under-valued, marginalised women jockeys no end of good. Race report, page 25

QUICKLY

BP drops action
Bank accounts belonging to Greenpeace and several of its members were unfrozen after BP suspended its legal action for £1.4m damages. Page 7

Hunters claim victory
Deer hunters claimed victory over the National Trust even though they failed to lift a ban on stag hunting. Page 7

Mir space walk
Two Russian cosmonauts on Mir will take a risky international space walk today. Page 15

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news

significant shorts

Investors warned of 'virtual' conmen on the Internet

Internet users were warned yesterday to beware online conmen who copy the web sites and logos of legitimate investment firms in order to rip off eager would-be investors.

The Securities and Investments Board (SIB), which regulates the financial services industry, said there have already been several cases of "copycat" sites on the World Wide Web.

The enormous growth of the Internet, which is doubling in users roughly every six months, is matched only by the rapid expansion of online commerce – and attempted fraud. Would-be conmen can easily register and set up their own, apparently legal, web sites. It takes moments to surf to a legitimate business's site, where simply accessing the page makes it possible to copy all or part of the contents. The fake copied site can then be used as a "virtual storefront" to tempt the unwary into providing personal financial data or even money.

Charles Arthur

Cash machine spills toxic fumes

Twelve bank staff were treated in hospital yesterday after toxic fumes spilled from a cash machine. A customer was using the machine inside a Halifax branch in Victoria, central London when a small electrical fire started. The customer was given first aid and staff who went to help got fumes in their eyes and throat.

The area was cordoned off while firefighters tried to find out what chemical was coming from the machine.

Casualties were taken to hospital but were not badly hurt and were expected to go home after a check-up.

A Halifax spokesman said the customer went back to work after treatment in the branch.

Stalker jailed for 15 months

A stalker who terrorised his ex-girlfriend for nine months was yesterday jailed for 15 months.

Southampton Crown Court heard that Paul Cox, 34, had "dominated" Sandra Holland, 36, with a series of gruesome acts and threats after they split up in January last year. On one occasion Cox, a heating engineer, posted raw liver through her letterbox and left a severed chicken's head on a bible under a dustbin at her mother's house.

He repeatedly telephoned her at her home in New Milton, Hampshire, alternating silent calls with death threats. On one occasion Cox rang Miss Holland 22 times during a two-hour period.

His bombardment of calls forced the single mother to change her number three times.

Skunk Anansie named top band



British indie rockers Skunk Anansie were yesterday named best British band and top live act at the *Kerrang!* music magazine awards.

The south-London group, who released the acclaimed *Stash* album, received their awards from last year's winners Terrorvision and Tura Satana. Skunk Anansie are fronted by bisexual black singer Skin (pictured), who refuses to talk about Britpop and recently told journalists she would smash them in the face if they asked her about Oasis.

American gothic rockers Marilyn Manson scooped best live international act and best band in the world. Other winners were The Prodigy for their *Breathe* video and surf rockers Reef who took the award for best single with "Place Your Hands On Me".

Search for custody-battle child

Police in Wales yesterday stepped up the search for a six-year-old girl caught up in a custody battle who disappeared with her father at the weekend.

Wilfrid Hartnagel and his daughter Sharon, who was born in Wales, left their home at Llanidloes, Powys, shortly before the girl's mother, Ines Kottenhof, arrived from Germany to collect the little girl. Earlier this month Ms Kottenhof won a court order giving her custody. Mr Hartnagel telephoned the BBC in Cardiff saying he was still in Wales and that he intended to fight the custody order even if it meant going to prison. Police are not concerned for Sharon's safety but said that reports of sightings so far had proved fruitless.

Tony Heath

Racist response to fine cost £350

A man who wrote a racist letter to a traffic warden's office after being given a £40 parking ticket has been hit with a £350 legal bill. John Duggan sent the letter, littered with four-letter words and racist references, along with a cheque to pay for the parking fine earlier this year. But Haringey Council in north London decided to prosecute after the black member of staff who opened the letter was "shocked" by its contents. Duggan was fined £50 and ordered to pay £100 costs by Haringey magistrates.

Students' Internet ideas wanted

Students could win up to £3,000 for coming up with new ideas for using the Internet. They are invited to submit their ideas for innovative applications of online technology to a special home page, where they will be viewed by judges.

The Young ISCAS (Information Society Creativity Awards) are a part of the Department of Trade and Industry's Information Society Initiative for businesses.

people



Butterfly idea: Muhammad Ali with an orphan fan in San Pedro (Photograph: David Guttenfelder/AP)

Ali goes the rounds with care package to Africa

Fans chanted "Ali! Ali!" as the former world heavyweight boxing champion Muhammad Ali visited the city of San Pedro near the Liberian border this week to deliver food and gifts to war refugees.

All came to San Pedro, on the Ivory Coast, after a Roman Catholic nun who cares for Liberian refugee children at a mission in the city embarked on a letter-writing campaign to raise funds for food, medicine and school supplies.

"I never actually expected to get such a response," said Sister Sponsa Beltran, who heard in July from Ali and from Yank Berry, a Canadian entrepreneur whose VitaPro Foods Processing company produces a soy-based meat substitute that has been used to feed refugees elsewhere in Africa.

The two men joined forces to make the trip to West Africa and deliver VitaPro, along with toys and medicine, to the Centre Bon Berger Catholic Mission in San Pedro. Sister Beltran cares for 105 Liberian children – 61 of them handicapped – at the mission. She said about 400 others in the area also rely on her for food and care.

Ali, 55, suffers from Parkinson's disease and speaks in a barely audible whisper, but he shook hands and traded joke punches with scores of children who crowded the mission grounds to see him.

All's most famous visit to Africa was in 1974, when he beat George Foreman in Kinshasa, in what was then Zaire, in their heavyweight title bout known as the Rumble in the Jungle. He returned to Africa in 1980 for a far less successful trip, trying to persuade African countries to follow the United States in a political boycott of that year's Moscow Olympic Games.

Many African countries refused to go along with the boycott.

Ivory Coast became home to some 350,000 Liberian refugees during Liberia's seven-year civil war. The war ended late last year and the country's presidential elections held in July were peaceful, but many refugees have yet to return to their homeland for fear of a renewal of violence or because their homes were destroyed in the fighting.

Sister Beltran said she hoped eventually to move all the children to the San Pedro mission to Liberia.

Medicine woman down with fever

Jane Seymour, the star of the television show *Dr Quinn, Medicine Woman*, is undergoing urgent medical treatment herself after succumbing to a nasty bout of dengue fever.

The actress was bitten by a mosquito while she was staying on a Caribbean island and is so ill that the filming of her latest movie, *The New Swiss Family Robinson* – a remake of the Disney classic – has had to be delayed.

Seymour, who stars opposite her real-life husband, James Keach, in the film which is being shot in Puerto Rico, has had to scrap plans for a holiday in her native England once filming is over.

In the film the Robinsons set



Police identify 'lady of the lake'

Police have identified a mystery body known as "lady of the lake" which was found bound and weighted at the bottom of Coniston Water in Cumbria a week ago.

The name of the woman will be revealed by detectives today; police are expected to name the body as that of Carol Park, a 31-year-old primary school teacher, who disappeared from her home near Barrow-in-Furness, 14 miles from the lake, in 1976.

Mrs Park, who had three young children, vanished from the bungalow she shared with her husband Gordon, in Leese, near Barrow, while the rest of the family were on a day trip to Blackpool.

Police were able to identify the remains after experts reconstructed her jaw, mouth and teeth.

Jason Bennetto

briefing

PSYCHOLOGY

For a healthier heart, turn into a shrinking violet

Submissive women who are content to take a back seat have fewer heart attacks than their more self-assured sisters who insist on playing a dominant role, researchers have found.

Scientists at Edinburgh University who gave personality tests to 1,600 men and women found that submissiveness had little effect on a man's risk of having a heart attack but reduced the risk among women by nearly a third.

Dr Martha Whiteman, who led the research, said: "The people who scored highly on the submissiveness scale are content to be that way. They have not been forced to submit to anyone – it is their nature to be meek."

The findings, published in the *Lancet*, support the results of previous studies linking personality and mortality risk. Some studies have shown that aggressive, highly competitive people – those with Type A personalities – face a greater heart attack threat than placid Type B individuals.

Jeremy Lawrence

TOBACCO

Pregnant smokers ignore risks

More women are smoking during pregnancy because they do not believe it is a danger to themselves or the baby, it was revealed yesterday.

Fifty per cent of pregnant women who smoke have their first cigarette within half an hour of waking up, with 20 per cent smoking within five minutes. And pregnant women who smoke are more likely to deny the dangers of smoking than non-smokers, according to research by the Health Education Authority.

The findings come as an increasing number of women choose to continue smoking during pregnancy despite it being linked with an increased risk of ectopic pregnancy, low birth weight, increased risk of miscarriage and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. In 1996, 32 per cent of pregnant women were regular smokers compared with 29 per cent in 1995. According to the research, which will be presented to the 10th World Conference on Tobacco or Health in Faking this weekend, 93 per cent of smokers, compared with 41 per cent of non-smokers, do not think cutting down or stopping smoking during pregnancy is important.

FINANCE

Summertime, and spending is easy



Parents spend nearly £500 on each child to keep them entertained over the summer holidays, a report revealed yesterday.

The six-week bill to amuse children out of school adds up to £464.50, including a holiday, trips to the cinema and theme parks, toys and games. The biggest cost is the annual holiday which costs an average of £950 for a family of four – £227 for each child. Summer school costs around £51, holiday clothes £50, trips to theme parks £28, zoos £17 and watching the latest films £13.

Other costs include visiting local events such as fairs and fairs, costing £19, and days out with the family which cost around £32. For families with more than one child, the cost of the summer can run into thousands of pounds, especially if extra child care has to be arranged by working parents. The survey, from the debit card company Switch, said that one in ten mothers took on extra work over the holidays to fund their children's fun, while two-thirds of parents saved for months to ensure a good summer.

VALUES

London full of cultured hedonists

Londoners are hedonistic risk-takers keen to learn from other cultures and concerned about the environment, according to a report by the independent think tank, Demos.

The study, Values Added, was commissioned by the London Planning Advisory Committee and the London Arts Board, and has revealed that Britain is moving away from "Little England" values and that the capital is leading that shift. It found that compared with the British as a whole, Londoners are more tolerant of traditionally frowned upon activities such as drug taking, and 37 per cent of them believe that "people should not be prosecuted for possessing small amounts of heroin, compared with 21 per cent in the country as a whole".

HEALTH

Obesity spreads round the world

Obesity has become so widespread it should be considered a worldwide pandemic, experts claimed today.

Researchers from Australia and New Zealand said a new approach was needed to tackle the problem. Writing in the *British Medical Journal*, they said one estimate suggested the average adult Australian had grown heavier by one gram a day over the past decade, despite increased awareness of the dangers. According to the Royal College of Physicians, the number of adults in England who qualified as being obese doubled from 1980 to 1994. Obesity is linked to a range of health problems including diabetes, heart disease, and certain types of cancer. The researchers wrote: "Obesity presents us with two challenges: to treat people who are currently obese and to prevent obesity in people who are lean. Neither of these challenges are currently being met."

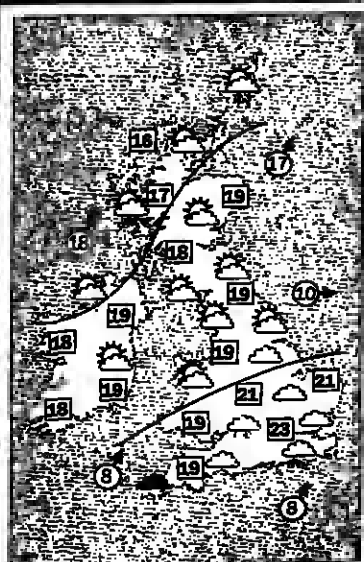
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WEATHER



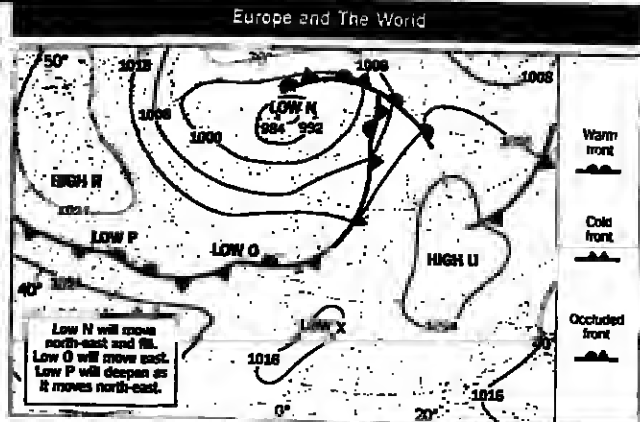
General Summary and Outlook

Northern and western parts of Scotland will be breezy with showers, but most of Scotland, North Wales, northern England and Northern Ireland will have a dry and sunny day with pleasant temperatures and humidity. Southern and central England, East Anglia and south Wales will be cloudy with patchy light rain and only a few brighter spells. It will again be humid, especially in the south-east, and many southern and western coasts will be affected by mist and fog patches.

Tomorrow will bring rain, some of it heavy, to much of Scotland and the north of Britain, whilst the south and east stay mainly dry but rather warm and humid. On Sunday, the south-east will be wet while the rest of the country enjoys dry weather. Showers will affect north-west Scotland. On Monday, heavy showers will move from the south to affect eastern areas of England and Scotland, while the west stays dry. Tuesday will see showers in the east with some sun in the west.

Location	Temp	Wind	Cloud
Aberdeen	18	18	6
Anglessey	17	17	6
Belfast	17	17	6
Birmingham	19	19	6
Blackpool	18	18	6
Bournemouth	19	19	6
Brighton	19	19	6
Cardiff	18	18	6
Canterbury	19	19	6
Exeter	19	19	6
Glasgow	18	18	6
Guernsey	19	19	6
Inverness	18	18	6
Isle of Man	19	19	6
Leamington	19	19	6
Liverpool	18	18	6
Llandudno	18	18	6
London	19	19	6
Manchester	19	19	6
Newcastle	19	19	6
Nottingham	19	19	6
Oxford	19	19	6
Plymouth	19	19	6
Reading	19	19	6
Sheffield	19	19	6
Southampton	19	19	6
Stirling	18	18	6
Torquay	19	19	6
Walsley	19	19	6
Warrington	19	19	6
Widnes	19	19	6
Worcester	19	19	6
Wrexham	18	18	6

Location	Temp	Wind	Cloud
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Walsley	19	19	6
Warrington	19	19	6
Widnes	19	19	6
Worcester	19	19	6
Wrexham	18	18	6

AA Roadwatch

London, Richmond Park between Kingston Gate and Ham Gate closed for roadworks until Oct 31.

London, A10 Hammersmith Bridge. Closed until January 1998.

Surry, M25 J8-10. Lane closures both ways until further notice.

Staffordshire, A50 Stoke On Trent. Major works at Mermaid March 1998.

Leicestershire, M1 J24 and Sawley Island. Work for the new Derby Southern Bypass.

Greater Manchester, A58 Park Rd. Closed southbound between the A6 and Chadderton Way. Diversion via A6 and Bolton Road until Oct 24.

Merseyside, A577 Bold. Stanley Rd closed northbound until further notice.

Time & Wear, A19 Newcastle area. Roadworks at Killingworth.

West Yorks, M1 J47. Major long-term roadworks until Sept 15.

North Yorks, A19 Thorneby-on-Tees. Roadworks.

City of Glasgow, M8 J25. Clyde Tunnel A739 Cardonald interchange has narrow lanes both ways due to roadworks until Aug 30.

Location	Temp	Wind	Cloud
London	19	19	6
Manchester	19	19	6
Newcastle	19	19	6
Nottingham	19	19	6
Oxford	19	19	6
Plymouth	19	19	6
Reading	19	19	6
Sheffield	19	19	6
Southampton	19	19	6
Stirling	18	18	6
Torquay	19	19	6
Walsley	19	19	6
Warrington	19	19	6
Widnes	19	19	6
Worcester	19	19	6
Wrexham	18	18	6

سلا من الاموال

GCSE day of joy and tears, but for others there's a more important thing called Oasis



Making a dash for it: While many teenagers rushed to get their GCSE exam results yesterday (Photograph: Joan Russell/Guzelan), others were more keen to be among the first in queues at record shops to buy Oasis' third album, *Be Here Now* (Photograph: Peter Macdonald)

‘They yelled with delight, wept, and took long drags on cigarettes as they clutched the envelopes containing their scores’

Esther Leach

Pupils yelled with delight, some cried while others took long drags on cigarettes yesterday as they clutched the envelopes with their GCSE results at Lawnswood School in Leeds. Most of the results were good, about a dozen were unexpectedly disappointing. Pauline Horswill, the year head, had been prepared for anything. Her handwritten notices around the school told students not to leave without talking to a tutor about their results, good or bad. “I’m rather like a mother hen, I’m afraid. But after spending five years with them you feel like you own them,” she said. “We are asking them to fill in a questionnaire about their

plans for the future. Even the successful ones can panic – they go through quite a bit of anxiety. There are teachers here to guide and advise students. There are bound to be disappointments, but on the whole most seem quite happy with what they’ve got.” Freya Turk, 16, was more than happy with her grade A in drama, and a C in maths pleased her too. “I want to be an actress, so I’m pleased with the grade A in drama, and the C in maths is quite a surprise. I’ll go on to sixth form then hopefully university and then drama college after that.” The threat of student fees once she got to university didn’t trouble her too much. “I’m fortunate, I suppose. My par-

ents are in a position to help me financially.” Daniel Hansboro, 16, sat on a bench in the school hall, reading and re-reading his results. “I’ve got B in maths and B in science, I can’t believe it. I wasn’t expecting it, I also got C in business studies, though. But B in maths will be good for computer courses. I want to get into computers eventually. In the meantime I’ll stay on here and go on to the sixth form.” His friend Paul Heseldine, 16, was less certain about his future other than he wanted to leave the school. “I’m not so happy with my results – I got C in English and E in design. I want to do something in computers, but I won’t stay here to do it. I think it’s time for a change,” he said.

Meanwhile, the retiring head teacher, Clive Robinson, 53, looked on for the last time as the students collected their results. “We have had some very good results,” he said holding a piece of paper listing at least a dozen students with up to eight passes, most of them with straight As. “But there are those who didn’t expect anything who have achieved something, and these are success stories too.” He said this year was out as good as the last two years at Lawnswood, which has 1,540 students, aged from 11-18. “Cohorts of children vary, teaching methods have changed, and I imagine the marking hasn’t, either. “It’s unrealistic to be great every year – there will always be ups and downs.”

Louise Hancock and Lucy McDonald

It was a question of getting your priorities right. Exam results could wait, but the Brothers Gallagher, apparently, could not. Outside HMV in Guildford, Surrey, 16-year-old Sophie Harding, was among the crowd of yawning youngsters which had opted to queue for the new Oasis album yesterday morning, rather than rushing off to collect GCSE results. “The launch of the new Oasis album is more important to me than my GCSEs – Oasis come first in everything,” she said. Another teenager, who had joined the line at 7.30am, summed up the feelings of many, saying: “I’d rather buy the album first and then get my re-

sults. The good news before the bad.” One step ahead, Brendan Carey, 16, got up at 6.30am to get to Virgin in Wimbledon in time to be amongst the first to buy the album. “I love Oasis. I can play all their songs on my guitar. I revised to Oasis, so they are obviously more important than my results.” Jonathan Duffy observed wryly: “I’ve waited 22 months for the new album, and only 2 months for the results.” Paul Murrell, 16, said: “It means more to me than anything. I don’t care about my results – this is more important, I’m really excited and I’m going home to play it right now.” Luke, 16, admitted his reasons for being first in line were of a more practical nature. “I need cheering up in case my results

are bad.” And Nim Nakavon said: “I’m here to escape pressure from my parents over exam results. It doesn’t mean it’s more important – it’s just something you’ve got to do.” Tom Ellis, another GCSE student, said: “It’s more important than anything. I mean, I wouldn’t get up this early in the morning for anything else.” In the City, lawyers and bankers proved to be similarly committed, although the demands of work meant that many offices selected one unlucky person to queue for the album and buy in bulk. Steve Brett, the manager of Virgin Bishopsate, in the heart of the Square Mile, said: “Both Bishopsate and Poultry stores sold 500 albums in the first hour – unheard of by City standards.”

A spokesman for HMV predicted that it would have sold 50,000 copies by the end of the first day. Estimates for the weekend are as high as 500,000 copies nationwide, making it the fastest-selling UK album ever. Kate Waterfall, of Virgin, said: “If we had closed our doors at 9am, the album would still have been the biggest seller this week. Stores across the UK and Ireland sold on average 9,000 copies an hour all day. A few stores have even sold out on the first day, which has never happened before.” The biggest seller in its first week in the UK was Thriller, by Michael Jackson, at 375,000, while Oasis’ last album, *What’s the Story... Morning Glory* sold 370,000 in its first week. “*Be Here Now* will definitely beat that,” said Ms Waterfall.

Vegetarian, 24, gets CJD

Charles Arthur Science Editor

A 24-year-old Kent woman, who was a strict vegetarian for the past 12 years, is the latest victim of the fatal “new variant” Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD), linked to “mad cow disease”. Clare Louise Tomkins, who is now being cared for at home by her parents, was diagnosed as having “v-CJD” this week by Professor John Collinge, an acknowledged expert in the field, after tissue tests at St Mary’s Hospital in London. There have been 25 reported cases in Britain since this form of the disease was first identified in 1995, though the Government has only confirmed 21 so far. It also enlarges an apparent

“cluster” of v-CJD cases around Ashford, Kent, where the first case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), or “mad cow disease”, was diagnosed in 1985. So far, four v-CJD victims have lived near Ashford. Tonbridge is about 25 miles away, and Miss Tomkins has lived there all her life, though she never worked on a farm. Furthermore, her strict vegetarianism – inspired, her father said last night, by her love of animals – means that if she caught it by eating BSE-infected food, she was infected by eating contaminated food even before the disease had been formally identified. That, in turn, could mean that many more people may be infected than was thought. Her father, Roger,

said yesterday: “When we told doctors she had been a vegetarian since 1985, there were a few raised eyebrows. They were very, very surprised. They are in no doubt that she caught CJD from mechanically-recovered food eaten before 1985.” He told The Independent: “It is absolutely tragic. She’s just turned 24. Our first knowledge about it was about October last year. She had lost a stone in weight. Her fiancé also told us that, for six months before that, her will to socialise had reduced.” Before becoming vegetarian, he said, “she just ate family food – from the supermarket or butchers. Just normal, average foods.” She had not been a par-

ticularly heavy eater of meat. He noted that Clare was so strict that she would not eat foods containing gelatin or animal fats. To date, about 161,000 BSE cases have been diagnosed, but an estimated 1 million BSE-infected cows have entered the food chain since 1985. Since 1989, the most infectious parts of cattle – such as the brains and spinal cord – have been banned from human consumption. Clare is in the advanced stages of the disease, being fed through a tube direct into her stomach, and needs 24-hour nursing at her home. “A year ago she was looking forward to getting married and now she is slowly dying,” said her mother yesterday.

McIntosh returns to National



McIntosh: ‘I feel very lucky’

Louise Jury

Genista McIntosh, the arts executive who dramatically quit the troubled Royal Opera House in May amid health fears, is to return to her previous post at the National Theatre and theatre in this country. She will be executive director alongside Trevor Nunn, when he takes over from Sir Richard Eyre as the theatre’s director in October. The two spent 14 years working together at the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford. Announcing the appointment yesterday, Mr Nunn said he was delighted that Ms McIntosh would be with him to assist the changeover. “She was widely acknowledged as a bril-

liant executive director of the National from 1990-1996 and she and I worked closely together at the RSC from 1972 to 1986. So with certain knowledge, I can say this is a great day for me, for the National Theatre and theatre in this country.” Ms McIntosh said she was very pleased. “I feel very lucky. I wasn’t expecting to be available so this was a most happy coincidence of circumstances.” She resigned as £100,000-a-year chief executive at the Royal Opera House in May after only four months. Ill health was given as the reason for her departure although attention also focused on the enormous difficulties of running the problem-plagued institution. At a

parliamentary select committee hearing last month, she said it was her unhappiness in the job that prompted her resignation, adding: “Had I continued I might well have become ill.” Yesterday she said she had no regrets about her stint at Covent Garden. “Experiences are never wasted. They can be difficult and they can be sometimes painful and upsetting, but there’s always something learnt and something gained.” Her return to the National Theatre comes as it, too, faces problems. It has £1.2m less to spend this year than five years ago because the Arts Council has been unable to increase its grant to keep pace with costs. Major building works are also under way.

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news

The heat is on and terrapins are going wild

Louise Hancock and Lucy McDonald

There are constant warnings about the dangers posed to the environment by global warming. But one danger that seems to have been overlooked until now is the threat of a terrapin population explosion.

Although they have been sighted in parkland during the current heatwave, one naturalist has predicted that wild terrapins could cause greater problems in the future.

Joe Pecorelli, of the London Aquarium, said: "If global warming continues, and temperatures rise in this country, then the terrapins will be able to breed more easily." The EU last month restricted the importation of terrapins after lobbying by environmental groups.

Concern first arose following the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles craze in the late Eighties when terrapin ownership increased dramatically with an estimated 8 million being imported into the



National nuisance: Terrapins such as this one in Roath Park, Cardiff, will breed quickly if global warming continues

Photograph: Nick Teharne

between 1985-1990. Although only the size of a 50p piece when young, terrapins grow rapidly, often to the size of a dinner plate.

Many terrapins, which attack fish, frogs and newts,

were then dumped by their owners but are now thriving in ponds and lakes. "Most people didn't realise just how big they can grow," said Sharon Harrison, of Petpals, in New Malden.

Surrey. "This means they can be very expensive as bigger tanks have to be bought to accommodate them. This has led to people abandoning them in the wild." There are estimated to be

800 terrapins scattered over more than 200 sites nationwide. The largest single community is in Roath Park Lake in Cardiff, which is thought to be home to at least 100. Gavin Jones, ranger at

Roath Park, said: "They are a national problem. The winters haven't been killing them off... They can attack fish, frogs and newts and there is no natural predator for them as yet."

Labour's hard line prompts dismay

Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

Labour's hard-line style of leadership came under the spotlight yesterday, after a suspended MP claimed pleas for sympathy had gone unheeded. Another suspended party member claimed she had been told of her fate not by officials but by the BBC.

The Liverpool West Derby MP, Robert Wareing, wrote to his party's Chief Whip, Nick Brown, in a suicidal state after being accused of having links with a front organisation for the Bosnian Serbs, but his letter went unanswered. He said yesterday that he knew how his fellow MP Gordon McMaster felt during the "last dark hours" before his own suicide last month.

Mr Wareing was found to have failed to declare a business interest, for which he was suspended from the Commons for a week and ordered to apologise.

In a statement, he said: "Colleagues must understand how deeply hurtful it is to have one's integrity called into question. Integrity is not a political prop to be tossed aside in exchange for a morning's headlines."

"After 50 years membership of the Labour Party, I was deeply shocked to be the subject of unfounded and scurrilous allegations which led to me being suspended from the party with no notice."

"All of the allegations, bar a failure to register a worthless shareholding in Robert Wareing Ltd, were thrown out by the committee, yet I have still not heard a word from my own party."

His claims were compounded

ed by similar complaints from Olga Clayton, a councillor suspended after Mr Brown's inquiry into Mr McMaster's death. It emerged that she had not been informed of the disciplinary action being taken against her before the press were told, though a Labour spokeswoman said unsuccessful efforts had been made to contact her.

Last night, Labour sources were largely unsympathetic to Mr Wareing's claims, though one hinted that Mr Brown had been instrumental in ensuring that the MP received support from his friends. He had several meetings with the widow of John Heddle, the Mid Staffordshire MP who killed himself in 1989, and she helped him to overcome his depression.

Mr Brown, who is generally known at Westminster as an affable if tough Chief Whip, was not available for comment last night. He has maintained in the past that he will not tolerate any form of rebellion by members. "They would risk expulsion from whatever I could get them expelled from," he said before the election.

A Labour spokeswoman said it would not have been appropriate for Mr Brown to have replied directly to Mr Wareing, as the inquiry into his conduct was still ongoing. A similar letter to Tony Blair had been acknowledged and would be answered more fully when he returned from holiday.

Another source said: "There is no sympathy for this guy really. He has been found guilty by a Commons committee and we acted swiftly, as did the House of Commons."

Young convicts ruling fuels prison crisis

Jason Bennett
Crime Correspondent

About 1,500 young men are being held unlawfully in adult jails a High Court ruling is expected to reveal today.

Prison officials were last night drawing up emergency contingency plans to move the offenders, aged between 15 and 21, to specialist custodial accommodation. The expensive move will be a big blow to the Prison Service which is already struggling to deal with an overcrowding crisis.

It follows a ruling in the High Court on Tuesday that it was unlawful to hold a girl aged 16 with adult women inmates. Female offenders are automatically held in adult jails before being assessed and transferred to specialist wings in other prisons. The decision affects only about 50 female offenders aged under 21, but the fact that it also covers convicted young males is far more significant as there are about 5,500 in jails in England and Wales.

The Prison Service confirmed last night that it was working on the assumption that the judgment - full details of which are being disclosed today - does cover men as well as women.

"We believe the ruling does not differentiate between the sexes," said a prison source.

Of the 5,500 convicted young male offenders, about 4,000 are housed in specialist Young Offender Institutions (YOIs). The remaining 1,500 are kept in adult jails, often in wings put aside for their sole use. However, the ruling is expected to outlaw this practice and force the prison authorities to provide specialist youth facilities such as full education programmes.

The Prison Service was last night considering where it could put the 1,500 offenders. There are very few places left in the YOI, many of which are already full, and simply designating wings in adult jails as units for under-21s will not be sufficient to comply with the court ruling.

On the question of young female inmates, the Prison Service has identified about 50 offenders who under the new court ruling are considered unlawfully held. These are expected to be moved to jails with designated young offender wings.

A Prison Service spokesman said: "Some, but not all of them, are being moved. It's disruptive and some will have to be moved around the country away from their families."

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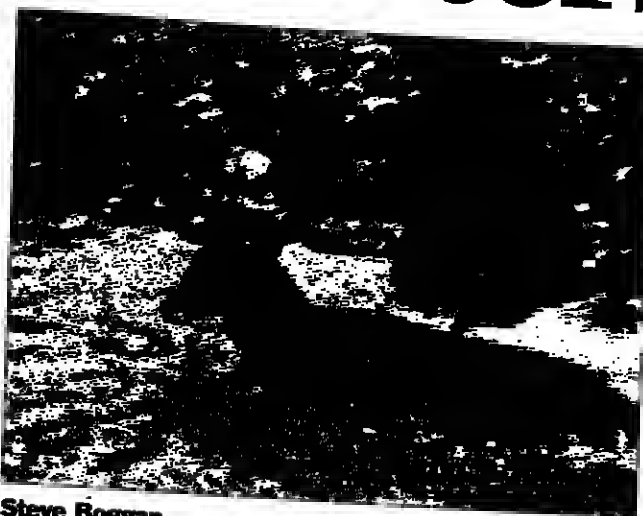
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Hunters scent blood over stag ban



Steve Boggan

Deer hunters claimed victory over the National Trust last night even though they failed in a High Court bid to lift a ban on stag hunting in Devon and Somerset.

The ban stayed in place but the National Trust was told by Mr Justice Robert Walker that the "speed and secrecy" with which it had been imposed last April represented a "serious error of judgment" which appeared to pander to media demands.

Leaving the way open for the hunt lobby to challenge the ban within weeks, the judge told the National Trust to go away and reconsider its decision to impose the ban on land of Exmoor and the Quantock Hills.

It was introduced following research by Professor Patrick Bateson, a Cambridge biologist, who proved that deer suffered excruciating pain and fear during a hunt.

Justice Robert Walker, sitting

in London, said the National Trust had been preoccupied with reaching a quick decision because of media pressure and public outrage over Professor Bateson's research.

"That seems to have led to secrecy being preferred rather than the opportunity for further consultation and discussion," he said. He described as "questionable" a decision to hold a press conference the day before the ban was imposed and, although deciding not to impose an order, he suggested the council of the National Trust meet again before another hearing to avoid future "expensive" litigation.

Huotmeo were delighted with the judge's comments. Paddy Groves, joint master of the Quantock Staghounds, said they left the way open for a challenge to the ban under the Charities Act in the Chancery Division of the High Court. He expected a hearing within weeks.

"We did not get the injunction making the Trust re-intro-



duce hunting, but everything else clearly went in our favour," he said. "The fact that the judge told them to go away and reconsider their decision is clearly very encouraging indeed."

We have what we want - a legal mechanism to challenge the ban - and we believe we will soon have the deer herd of the Quantock Hills in safe hands very soon."

The National Trust's response was more muted. Warren Davis, its spokesman, said the ban still stands but he added: "The National Trust will give serious consideration

to the judge's suggestion that its council should discuss the subject again."

"The welfare and conservation of the deer remains the Trust's primary concern and

we will continue working with our tenants, neighbours, local deer management groups ... to ensure the herds continue to thrive."

The Trust owns a strategic

Out of action: Hounds of the Quantock hunt and (left) a member of the hunt filmed during a kill. Main photograph: Christopher Jones

parcel of land in the Quantock Hills of Somerset and one tenth of the Exmoor National Park in Devon.

The court was told that the Quantocks and Exmoor are popular with visitors but are difficult to farm. Those difficulties were made harsher by the presence of unchecked numbers of red deer which broke down fences and consumed or damaged crops.

The judge said that all the evidence he had heard showed that the deer must be culled to keep the herds healthy genetically and in the interests of the farming community.

Only 10 to 20 per cent of the deer were killed by hunting with hounds each year by packs which had been established from the last century.

MoD homes sale attacked as shameful

Christopher Bellamy
Defence Correspondent

The taxpayer got a raw deal when the Conservative government sold 57,000 service married quarters for up to £139m less than they were worth in pursuit of short-term financial gain, according to a damning report by the Government's financial watchdog, the National Audit Office, published today.

Bruce George MP, now chairman of the House of Commons Defence Committee, will investigate "the most shameful and stupid decision" of the last government, in the autumn.

The NAO report on the sale of the 57,000 houses to the Annington group of companies, led by the Japanese bank Nomura, for £1,662m reveals that the price charged was between £77m and £139m below the value of retaining them. Furthermore, the MoD has had to pay to lease them back, pay rent on them, and is responsible for maintenance and improvements, as well as the administrative cost and responsibility of allocating them to service families.

"I find it difficult to express coherently my continuing anger at the sale which was deeply insulting to servicemen and women," Mr George said. "It was insensitive, stupid and financially and politically motivated to gain resources for the general election. As time goes on this persistent folly will be more and more revealed."

Menzies Campbell, the Liberal Democrat defence spokesman, said: "This damning report shows that the privatisation of service housing was the sale of the century. The NAO has found that crucial as-

sumptions upon which the terms of sale were based are fundamentally flawed and as a result the public purse is a lot lighter than it should be."

The NAO calculated that the sale of married quarters would have benefited the taxpayer if the services had only needed to occupy half of them and if property values had only increased at 0.2 per cent a year - whereas they are currently increasing by about 10 per cent. The net result is a loss to the taxpayer of up to £139m.

The report is highly critical of the way the handover was managed. After the establishment of the Defence Housing Executive in April 1995, it "became the Department's main point of contact. They maintained responsibility for directing the maintenance and upgrading of those houses leased back from Annington, the identification of surplus quarters, works services [to separate houses being sold off] and allocation of specific houses to individual service families."

Meanwhile the Annington Group will make a return on its investment of 7.5 per cent per year, in addition to profits from redeveloping sites the services do not need.

However, the report says the sale succeeded in transferring four fifths of the married quarters estate to the private sector and provided funds of £100m to upgrade sub-standard quarters over the next five to seven years. It also says the sale itself was well managed and brought in more money than the MoD's advisers had expected.

National Audit Office, The Sale of the Ministry of Defence's Married Quarters Estate, HC 239, 22 August 1997

DAILY POEM

Prince Baltasar Carlos: after Velázquez

By Anibal Núñez
(translated by John Burnside)

Does it imply possession, that the land seems nothing but the stage on which you live? Never, my Lord, despite what you believe, mounted on your imaginary steed, or idling beneath this canopy of leaves provided by an oak-tree, and the man who makes this image, following the laws of composition. No one owns a world he cannot see. If you can turn aside from this bright realm of subtlety and shade how could these hills and hunting-grounds be yours? They are the painter's. Sometimes, when he ignores the skill that seeks perfection, they are his; and nothing you possess will last, sweet prince: the good life will become a dreadful bore, if death not erase you long before.

Today's Daily Poem comes again from Agenda magazine's special issue devoted to new Spanish verse, edited by Jordi Doce. The Agenda "Anthology of Spanish Poetry" costs £4.90; annual subscriptions are £20 from 5 Cranbourne Court, Albert Bridge Road, London SW11 4PE.



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news

Hospitals losing battle to cut lists

Jeremy Laurence
Health Editor

Rising emergency hospital admissions were blamed yesterday for a sharp jump in the NHS waiting list which shows that 1.2 million people are now queuing for operations.

The 13 per cent annual increase in the waiting list – for non-emergency treatment – was described as “grim news for patients” by the British Medical Association. Official figures published yesterday, which were leaked to *The Independent* at the weekend, show an extra 136,000 patients were waiting for treatment at the end of June, compared with a year ago.

Patients waiting more than a year for treatment have increased more than fourfold over the period from 10,400 to 47,000. The figures also reveal that 388 patients had been wait-

ing longer than the 18-month Patient's Charter guarantee, compared with nine a year earlier.

The pressure on hospitals is the result of a combination of factors including the unexplained rise in emergency admissions, estimated at 13 per cent nationally over four years, which was singled out yesterday by John Maples, Tory health spokesman. “The evidence is that emergency admissions are continuing to grow, making the task of cutting waiting lists even more difficult,” he said. “Unfortunately, the Government is exacerbating the problem by increasing costs and reducing efficiency.”

Emergencies tend to be more expensive to treat than routine cases and many NHS trusts have been forced to cut their contracts for routine cases this year, which means waiting lists



Patient business: As waiting lists rise, health minister Tessa Jowell was promoting the Government's preventative medicine strategy at a health centre in Birmingham. Photograph: Newstream

grow, to cope with the anticipated growth in emergency work. Trusts are also carrying deficits over from last year, the toughest financially in a decade, adding to their problems.

The BMA and opposition parties said there was no hope of cutting the waiting list without extra cash for the NHS above the extra £1bn already

pledged for hospitals in England next year. Dr Sandy Macara, chairman of the BMA, said: “In the current situation where many health authorities and trusts are in financial deficit, everyone agrees that we have no option but to provide for the normal increase in emergency cases this winter. But the inevitable consequence is that

waiting lists and waiting times will rise to record levels. The only way to prevent this is an immediate injection of additional resources this winter.” The Government blamed the worsening situation on the legacy it had inherited from the Conservatives but insisted it would stick to its manifesto

commitment to “cut NHS waiting lists by treating an extra 100,000 patients”. However, it was unclear yesterday whether ministers would regard treatment of an extra 100,000 patients, without a concomitant cut in waiting lists (as more patients join them), as fulfilment of this pledge.

Alan Milburn, the health minister, said: “Record NHS waiting lists and longer waiting times are the price patients have paid for the squandering of precious NHS resources on running the Tories' internal market. The new Government has already put in place a series of measures to tackle the mess we have inherited.” He admitted, however, that waiting lists were

“likely to go on rising for some time”.

Health authorities are to get details of their budget increases for next year in October, two months earlier than normal, to help them plan ahead. They have been told to put urgent and emergency patients first and to avoid breaches of the Patient's Charter.

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Ring of confidence: Molten bronze flows at the Whitechapel Bell Foundry as part of the £3m Millennium Bells restoration project Photograph: Jim Byrne

Clear as a bell: our silent churches start to find their voices

Stephen Goodwin
Heritage Correspondent

The first casting of "Millennium Bells" took place at the Whitechapel Bell Foundry in east London yesterday - part of a £3m project to restore full voice to church towers, some of which have been silent for decades.

Molten bronze flowed in a golden stream from the furnace to produce six bells, watched in awe by ringers from the three churches where they will be installed. Each of the bells is about 2ft in diameter and will be knocked out of its mould at the 18th century foundry today.

The £3m allocated by the Millennium Commission to the volunteers of the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers will be distributed to 100 churches where bells need restoring or replacing. The lottery money has been matched by similar amounts raised by hands of ringers and local communities.

The bells cast yesterday were for St Thomas a Becket at Shirenewton, near

Chepstow on the Welsh border; St John the Evangelist, Preston, Lancashire; and SS Peter and Paul at Wingrave, Buckinghamshire.

St Thomas a Becket has six bells which have been unringable for more than 35 years. Four of the set, dating from the 18th century, will be augmented with the new castings.

St John the Evangelist has 10 bells, two of which are cracked. The set will be replaced by eight redundant bells from Holy Trinity, Bolton, and the two new ones. For SS Peter and Paul, the project will complete a century-old plan to install a ring of eight bells.

The sound of church bells has a symbolism for urban and rural communities far beyond a summons to prayer or the tolling of the hours. Over the centuries they have been rung to commemorate events of local, national and global significance from weddings to ringing in the New Year and marking victories in war such as the Armistice and VE day.

BP drops £1.4m damages lawsuit

Steve Boggan

Frozen bank accounts belonging to Greenpeace and several of the organisation's prominent members were freed up yesterday after BP suspended its £1.4m damages action.

The lawsuit, which some environmentalists believed represented the start of a campaign to bankrupt Greenpeace, was dropped when campaigners agreed not to "unlawfully" interfere with BP's attempts to find new oil deposits in the Atlantic Ocean.

The activists, senior directors Sarah Burton and Chris Rose, campaigner Liz Pratt and the captain of *AMT Greenpeace*, John Castle, were named in summonses issued by the High Court in Edinburgh following Greenpeace's week-long occupation of the *Stena Dex* drilling rig in the Foinaven field, West of Shetland, earlier this month.

BP successfully argued that the protesters should compensate it for the £100,000-a-day rental charge of the platform and other costs. A "schedule of arrestment" was issued from the Edinburgh Court of Sessions, seeking £1.4m from the group and the four members and "all moveable things in your hands belonging or obtaining to them".

However, following talks with Greenpeace, BP suspended the threat. "These discussions and the continuance of the existing court orders should allow us to get on with developing Foinaven free from the risk of unlawful interference in the field or with the vessels serving in it," the company said in a statement.

Furthermore, in a letter to Greenpeace, BP said: "BP has never sought, and is not now seeking, to stifle legitimate campaigning by Greenpeace." It would, however, act again if campaigns became unlawful, the company added.

Greenpeace was hailing the announcement as a victory, although there is still an injunction in place preventing direct action against BP's operations in the Foinaven field. Greenpeace is to make a legal challenge against the granting of exploration licences by the Government to BP and 20 other oil companies which it believes are operating unlawfully in their attempts to find new stocks of oil.

It claims the Government failed to carry out environmental impact surveys before granting the licences. Its experts believe fragile reefs could be damaged by the exploration.

Chris Rose, deputy executive director of Greenpeace, said: "Public support has led BP to back down. They should be given some credit for listening, but the only thanks due are those owed to our supporters. They should now stop oil exploration in the Atlantic."

"Greenpeace will continue to exercise its freedom to campaign against the oil industry's role in climate change, and, in particular, the totally unjustifiable expansion of fossil fuels, at a time when the climate cannot sustain the use of existing reserves. The campaign on the Atlantic Frontier and in the Arctic will continue."

A spokesman for the organisation said it had given an undertaking to the court not to do anything unlawful in the Foinaven field.

But Greenpeace was resisting earlier attempts by BP to limit its activities in the whole area west of the Shetlands. "That is an awful lot of sea and we would not be restricted to that," he said. "Now we are just limited in the Foinaven field."

Proceedings against Captain Castle are not completely at an end. He will appear at the Court of Sessions in Edinburgh today, in relation to a breach of an earlier order.

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news

Warning on hidden cost of Tartan tax

Stephen Goodwin

Any move by an Edinburgh parliament to use its tax-raising powers could cost young Scots more than £300,000 each during a working lifetime, a senior tax adviser warned yesterday, as Scottish financial institutions continued to fret about the impact of devolution.

Not only could the prospect of a heavy financial penalty accelerate the "brain drain" of Scots, but pension firms

Devolution: Home rule could put young Scots' investments at risk, pension companies claim

fear that the perception of a "semi-detached" Scotland could deter savers and investors living in England.

Most customers of the big Scottish pension companies are actually English. The industry is concerned that people south of the border might feel their investment would be "at risk" and that salesmen from English rivals might drop hints of being

paid out in "funny money" in 20 years time.

"We want ministers to say loud and long that nothing like that is implied," said Grant Baird, executive director of Scottish Financial Enterprise, the industry's representative body. The devolution White Paper went some way to reassuring the industry that savers with Scottish companies would not be put at

a disadvantage, but for the SFE, the "level playing field" can't be stressed too often.

Government attachment to the tax-raising power was reaffirmed yesterday by Peter Mandelson, the minister without portfolio. During a visit to Scotland to support a double "Yes" vote in next month's referendum, he said it was "very important for a Scottish

parliament, for its credibility, to have that financial responsibility of tax-varying powers". The new parliament could raise or lower basic rate income tax by up to 3p in the pound.

The SFE and its members have tried to avoid being drawn into the political argument over home rule. "Banks don't have votes," observed Mr Baird. However, in probing the detail

of devolution they inevitably provide ammunition for the "No" campaign.

The tax-varying powers are, according to the SFE, "more worrying" than before the White Paper. Martyn Jones, senior tax adviser with the law firm Macleay, Murray and Spens, warned that Scots might leave the country rather than pay higher taxes.

While a tartan tax of up to £660 a year might be bearable to a patriotic Scot, viewed as lost investment a more impressive figure emerges. Mr Jones calculated that for somebody in their 20s, with 40 years of work ahead, who could have invested the money at a modest 10 per cent return, it represented a potential loss of some £300,000 - or up to £1.5m if the individual lived to 90.

"I can't see how a bright young Scot will be discouraged from joining the drift that already exists, either south to England or to other parts of Europe," Mr Jones said.

Home rule supporters dismissed the SFE claims as "spoilers". David Heald, a professor of accountancy at Aberdeen University, said if extra tax was levied it would be "because collectively Scotland wants a better standard of living".

**In the line of fire:
The MP who likes to say 'No'**

Tony Heath

It's just as well that Llew Smith, Labour MP for Blaenau Gwent, and arch opponent of Welsh devolution, is inured to criticism. He needs to be.

"I was called a Trot, a member of Militant, a Tory and a traitor to Wales," he said stoically, after the "Yes" and "No" contingents clashed during a public meeting at the Pontypridd Historical and Cultural Centre.

One of a series organised by the Cardiff-based *South Wales Echo* newspaper, it was intended to enlighten. But more heat than light was generated as Mr Smith and barrister Tim Williams confronted Professor Hywel Francis, convenor of the "Yes" campaign, and Mike German, the Liberal Democrats' devolution supremo in Wales.

"No" baseball caps and T-shirts were much in evidence among the 100-strong audience, but Mr Smith quickly got into his stride. "Anyone who opposes an assembly is labelled a 'Tory stooge'," he averred, drawing shouts of "stop moaning" and "get on with it" from the floor. He pressed on regardless. People were being asked to vote blind in the

18 September referendum, the MP claimed.

"Even Peter Mandelson doesn't know what will be in the assembly Bill. The referendum should be held after it is published and given time for a proper debate", he said.

This proved too much for Tony Carter, a retired official with the public services union Unison, and a Plaid Cymru member. Stabbing the air with his finger, he roared: "You're a Militant and a Trot". Inevitably, there was uproar.

Mel Cook, the *Echo's* deputy editor, who was gamely chairing the meeting, succeeded in restoring order, and Mr Smith continued. "The assembly is not about regionalism. It's about nationalism. And if you want to get rid of the quangos, you

don't need an assembly - all you need is to pass legislation in parliament."

Tim Williams who in the 1980s was Plaid Cymru parliamentary aide wound up half the audience with his warning that a "yes" vote would lead to self government. "The only way

to stop this is to vote 'No'," he recommended.

Although South Wales is now as green as a Richard Llewellyn valley, its radical past refuses to lie down. Professor Francis's father, Dai Francis, was general secretary of the South

Wales National Union of Mineworkers from 1963 to 1976, when miners wielded real power in the land.

"The cost of saying 'No' just isn't acceptable. This is not about dividing Wales or about nationalism whatever that may be. It's about giving Wales a fresh democratic mandate," he said.

The question of cost exercised many minds. "How much? Just 10p per person per week for everyone in Wales," said Mike German, who described himself as a "unilateral political disarmament".

Peter Law, a Blaenau Gwent councillor, reminded Mr Smith that his constituency Labour Party and local authority both backed the proposed assembly.

Carys Pugh, a veteran Labour activist from the Rhondda, induced one particularly talkative speaker to desist with a stentorian "shut-up". Momentarily you could have heard the rustle of a ballot paper.

As the meeting dispersed, a woman in a yellow dress, who declined to give her name, declared angrily: "That Rhondda rabble!" Where do you live, she was asked. "I live in Ponty." Peeved of Pontypridd snapped. A few miles can become the Grand Canyon when passions are inflamed.

Near the hall, an 18th-century bridge spanning the River Taff is covered in scaffolding. Repairs are underway. But more structural work may have to be put out to tender soon, to heal the divisions which the devolution debate seems to have created.

Photograph: Rob Stratton

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A cleaner Britain?: Royal Commission warns ministers that unrestricted rise in traffic poses threat to nation's health

Prescott sets out vision of transport revolution

Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

The Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution will warn ministers that the unrestrained rise in traffic poses a serious threat to the nation's health.

The report, due to be published next month, concludes that there is little evidence that air quality is improving—despite government reassurances that the atmosphere is gradually getting cleaner.

The news could not have come at a worse time for ministers—who set out the Government's vision for a truly integrated transport revolution yesterday.

Since being elected, ministers have ceaselessly repeated that they intend to get "people to use their cars less" in order to reduce pollution levels.

According to today's *Economist*, the new report will say that at street level some pollutants, such as nitrogen oxide, are increasing despite claims by the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions that national standards are improving.

The commission, made up of highly-respected scientists, will also question whether ministers can meet their target of a 20 per cent reduction in carbon dioxide levels without tougher measures to restrain traffic.

Yesterday's launch of the consultation paper on transport by ministers will help to assuage these doubts.

John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Transport, Environment and the Regions, made it clear that traffic levels could not grow at present rates.

"We would need a 100-lane motorway from London to Leeds to cope with the extra 10m cars—so something has to be done," he said.

The Government should take some solace from the fact that the new report is a reaction to the previous administration's inaction.

Three years ago the Royal Commission called for a doubling of petrol prices by 2005, justifying the draconian measure by claiming that car fumes caused up to 10,000 deaths a year.

A price rise may not be enough. A recent report by the Automobile Association found that 82 per cent of motorists would still use their cars even if petrol prices doubled over 10 years.

However, more worrying for transport planners is that the annual petrol price hike has been undermined by falling world oil prices.

But the commission's 100-plus proposals were largely ignored by John Major's Cabinet—a snub which has left the present Labour administration with the report's damning conclusion that too little has been done too late.

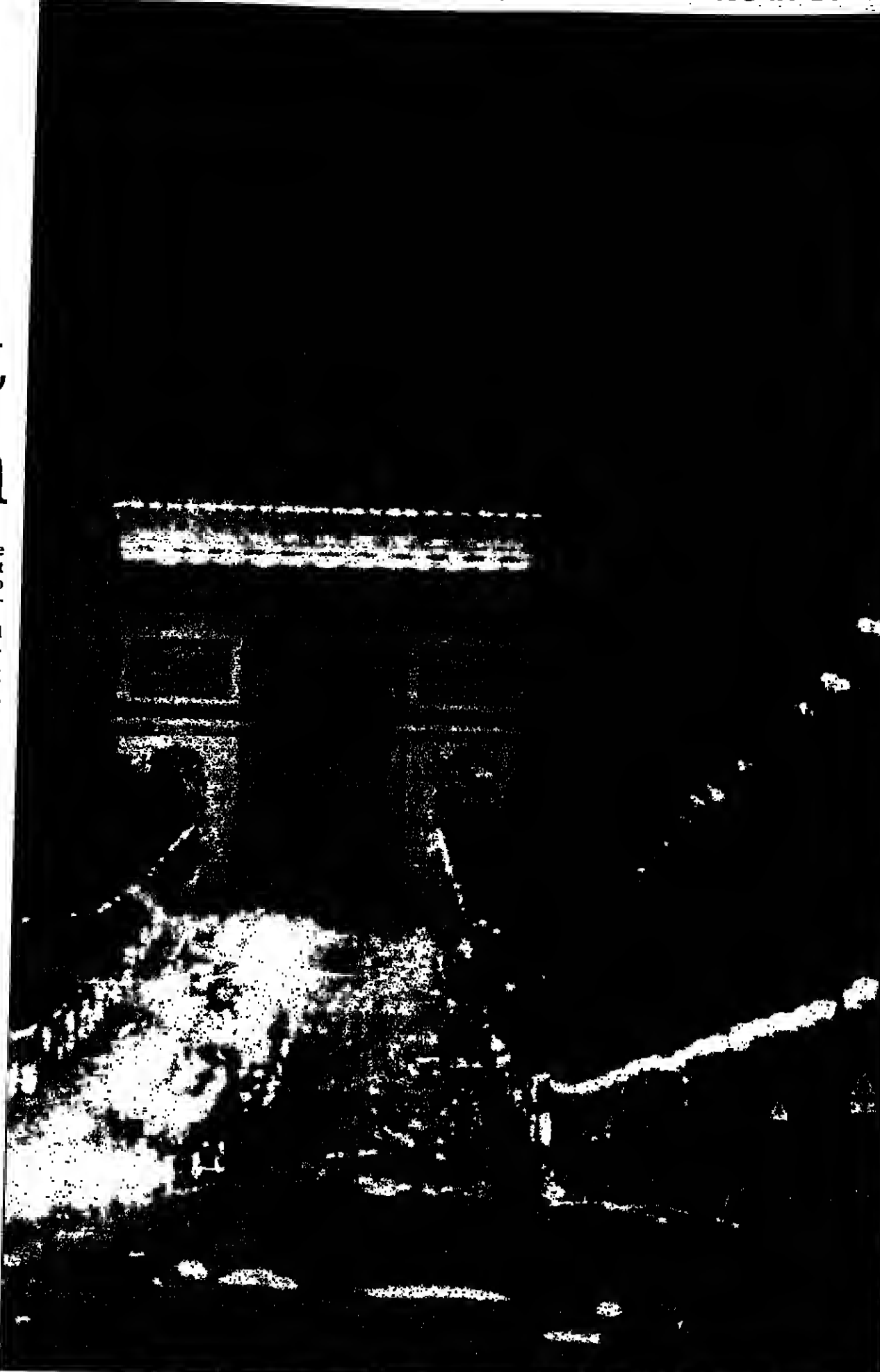
Experts are still generating new ideas to tackle traffic growth. Tom Burke, formerly special adviser at the Department of the Environment, outlined a road "permit" scheme in today's *New Statesman* magazine.

Mr Burke calls for "unrestricted access" for public transport on the road network—but would restrict petrol sales to motorists who possess a road permit.

A number of these could be auctioned to the highest bidder by the Government while motorists would receive a "free" set for a given time period.

"The big resistance would come from the psychological shock of confronting people directly with the notion that road space... is scarce and bears a cost," writes Mr Burke.

While ministers ponder their



Gridlock: Pollution levels in Paris have become so bad that the Government has stepped in

Photograph: Maryn Hughes

..... but it's lost on three-car families

Alexandra Williams

Visiting the car capital of Britain, the enormity of John Prescott's task became apparent. Housing estates were being built with triple garages the norm, the town centre streets were crammed with cars and the bus depot was far from bustling.

Guildford, the Surrey commuter town, has more cars per household than anywhere in the United Kingdom. And yesterday, the car owners of the most affluent towns in the country were determined to stick firmly behind the wheel.

One in 12, or 8.33 per cent, of households in Guildford have three or more cars. John James is part of that statistic.

Indignant about the Deputy

Prime Minister's proposals, Mr James said: "It's simplistic to say if there was better public transport more people would use it."

"It's to do with freedom of choice. It's our business and no one else's that we have three cars. Prescott's solution seems to be to hold a conference, wave a wand and hope everyone will obey. But I'm not going to give up my cars."

"We need them locally. I use my car for short journeys—I can't use anything else, it would be ridiculous. And it's all very well to have cheap train fares to London, but the rail companies penalise you by charging stupid amounts to park for the day."

Andrea Wooton had driven her Mercedes two miles from her home into the town centre.

Her husband, a surveyor, had driven to Slough to do a site visit. The family's third car is "a little runaround, a bit of an old banger."

Mrs Wooton felt it was justifiable for her family to have three cars. She said: "My husband can't use public transport—he's somewhere different each day. And I love my Mercedes and need it to pick the children up from school, do the shopping and take my mother to the hospital every week. I would be housebound without it."

"My eldest son is learning to drive in the other car. It's not extravagant, it's a necessity. It's all very well for Mr Prescott, who lives in London, to say this, but I'd like to see him in mine or my husband's shoes minus a car."

east London to close Trafalgar Road—a main thoroughfare—when traffic fume levels peaked. But the council objected and the families' application was denied. However, under plans

announced by Michael Meacher, the Minister for the Environment, targets would have to be met under a "National Air Quality Strategy"—even if roads had to be shut down in order to reduce the pollution levels.

Mr Meacher said at the press conference that the necessary legislation would be in place before the "end of the year".



Motor town: Homes with triple garages is the norm on many of Guildford's new estates

How Parisians will breathe more easily

As pollution reached critical levels for the fifth day this month in Paris, the French transport minister, Jean-Claude Gayssot, announced radical measures aimed at reducing pollution in the capital.

Commuters offered cheap fares in bid to cut car fumes.
Joanna Lee reports

For the first time, the state will subsidise travel on all forms of public transport in the Paris region, in an attempt to encourage commuters to leave their cars at home.

Today and yesterday all underground, bus and train tickets in the Paris region are half price. Commuters can buy a ticket for travel in Paris for as little as 25p, and if the levels of pollution do not fall, the project is likely to be extended.

The measures come in response to increasing concern in the capital over high levels of pollution, caused mainly by vehicle exhausts and exacerbated by a spell of hot, dry and windless weather.

The speed limit has already been reduced to 40mph on the Paris ring-road, and asthmatics in the capital and the surrounding area have been advised by local authorities to stay at home.

The long-term health implications of a polluted atmosphere are still not clear, but doctors are sure that it reduces lung capacity in the short term and aggravates asthma. France's mortality rate from asthma increased by 30 per cent during the 1980s.

Although the measures are far-reaching in the short term and may temporarily reduce pollution in Paris, they will do nothing for the long-term pollution problem in the capital, or other pollution blackspots like

Toulouse or Strasbourg. Furthermore, they do not include season-ticketholders, who make up a large number of users of public transport.

The main significance of these measures is that they show the new government is prepared to take pollution seriously—as demonstrated by projects outlined yesterday by the environment minister, Dominique Voynet.

His proposals include the reduction of traffic in Paris through investment in public transport, bus lanes and railways. The minister also hopes to cut the amount of heavy goods traffic—responsible for up to 50 per cent of the urban pollution—by transporting goods by rail.

There are also plans to encourage car users to move to unleaded petrol by increasing tax on diesel, which is much more harmful and still widely used in France today.

Jean-Claude de la Rue, founder of the Anti-Pollution Committee, said: "These proposals correspond exactly to what we have been demanding for the last two years."

They recognise that pollution in the city is a long-term problem which requires long-term solutions. But he was dismissive of the measures proposed by Mr Gayssot—describing them as "a drop in the ocean".

Global solutions to beat the traffic jams

Governments around the world are struggling to reduce traffic pollution and congestion.

Randeep Ramesh reports on how states intervene to curb pollution

The good burghers of Bern aim to reduce pollution levels by 60 per cent by 2005. One weapon used by the Swiss in their war against fumes is restricting parking. Bern uses a system of permits which effectively rules out parking for commuters. This has seen traffic volumes fall by 15 per cent since 1992.

Singapore is also touted as one of the best examples of state intervention. An alarming rise in car ownership in the late 1970s forced authorities to act. The Government implemented a twin-pronged policy: first, it charged motorists \$3 (about £1) to enter the city centre and then officials limited the number of new cars on the roads by auctioning off a set number of registrations every year. This saw traffic levels drop by 70 per cent in the city almost 20 years ago and since then it has only increased in line with the controlled rise in new cars.

Road pricing can also provide a valuable source of income. The world's most sophisticated road tolling technology is currently being used in Toronto. Highway 407 uses a series of overhead cameras which can "read" number plates and bill motorists the number of kilometres travelled.

The system, in place since the beginning of the year, costs drivers a few pence per mile and

will raise \$100m (£60m) a year by 2000.

Experts say that the level of economic disincentives is a key to the solution. Keith Buchan, director of MTRU transport consultants said: "You have to be careful with road pricing. Either you are raising money to invest in transport or you wish to restrain traffic."

"That is where you decide how much you are going to charge the motorist."

Mr Buchan points out that Oslo has a road pricing scheme which had very little effect on traffic levels. "It was just designed to raise money."

The real worry for many Governments is that while developed countries belatedly try to ease global pollution, developing societies rush to embrace the motor car.

John Whitelegg, professor of Environmental Studies at Liverpool's John Moores University, wrote earlier this year: "car ownership in India is growing at 25 per cent per annum. In 1996 Ford opened their first Escort factory and Daewoo opened a car plant." Prof Whitelegg adds that these growth rates are not sustainable "on any level".

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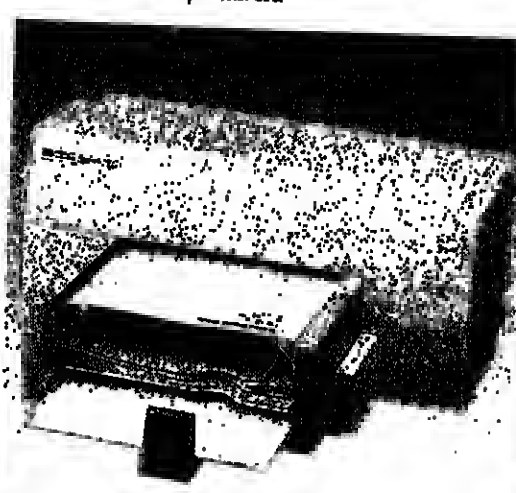
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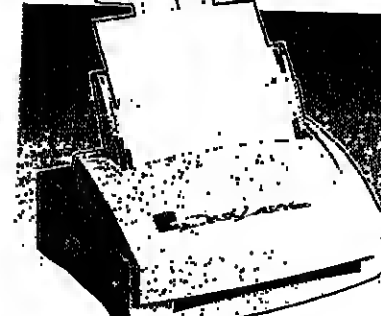
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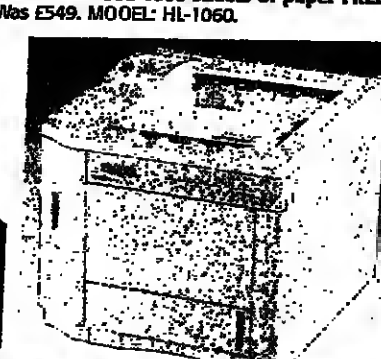
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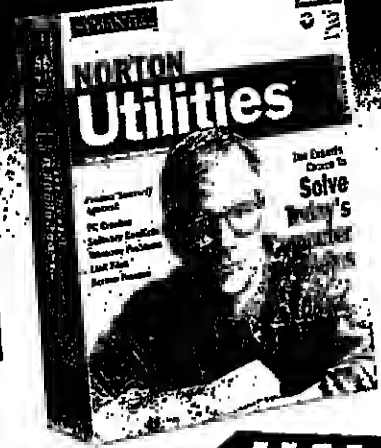
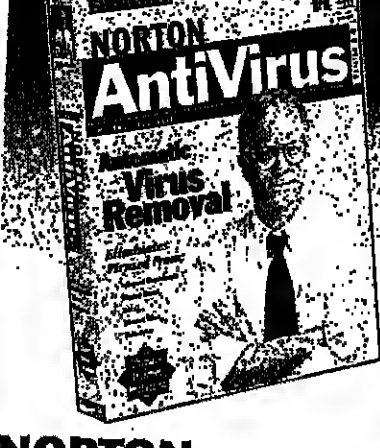
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international

Row over Montserrat aid package

Andrew Marshall

Britain announced details of an assistance package for the inhabitants of Montserrat yesterday, but it fell far short of what the volcano-stricken island's authorities had recommended. The country's Chief Minister Bertrand Osborne immediately called the aid package "totally unacceptable".

The delays and confusion in arranging help for the beleaguered inhabitants have led to anti-British demonstrations on the normally placid island against the Governor, Frank Savage, and sparked claim and counter-claim from Whitehall and Montserrat.

The Government moved quickly to try to defuse the row, defending itself against claims of inactivity and hesitation. "I understand that people are disgruntled but we have acted very quickly and reasonably," said Clare Short, Secretary of State for International Development.

"We provided funds for people who want to travel to Britain, we're now announcing a package for people who want to relocate in the Caribbean," she told the BBC.

Adults moving to other countries in the Caribbean would get £2,400 over the next six months, provided they did not have savings and assets worth more than £10,000. Those under 18 would get £600. Britain would also pay air fares to nearby countries. But that is a long way short of the recommendations made by local officials.

The package is pegged to average earnings on Montserrat and is for those living on the island on August 16, when scientists said the volcano was becoming much more dangerous. Those who left earlier can apply for help under another scheme yet to be announced.

In a live broadcast to Radio ZJB Montserrat, Ms Short warned islanders that "money did not grow on trees".

"We have to account to our Parliament for the way we spend our money. We have to compare it with what British people get when they have a disaster," she added. "Some kind of crazy figures have been thrown around," but said much higher payments had "never been on the cards".

Britain has already waived work permit regulations for Montserratians arriving in Britain, and allowed them to claim social security. This is a temporary concession and 1400 have already taken up the offer.

Defending itself against critics, the Foreign Office said yesterday that "there may be a breakdown in communication between the government in Montserrat and its own citizens". But the issue is currently being handled by three departments - the Foreign Office, the Department for International Development and the Home Office - and there are signs of weak co-ordination.

There were also clashes between local officials and the Foreign Office over whether an evacuation was under way. "Those people who want to leave are leaving," a Foreign Office spokesman said. "Some people are taking up the offer of voluntary evacuation, not in great numbers but in an orderly fashion. There's no emergency."

Montserrat officials said the Foreign Office was wrong. Eugene Skerritt, permanent secretary to the chief minister, said: "The evacuation has not started and the false reports are causing us a lot of trouble. People believe we are hiding something from them."

There is also mounting anger on the islands neighbouring Montserrat, which have taken in those who have fled the wrath of the volcano. Antigua now hosts 4,000 Montserratians - as many as remain in Montserrat itself. "I have written to the Secretary of State and said that the situation is now dire and requires urgent attention," said Ronald Sanders, High Commissioner of Antigua and Barbuda in London.



Fires within: People in the town of Olveston watching smoke billowing from the Soufriere Hills volcano yesterday

Photograph: Chris Brandis/AP

Senior Service prepares for evacuation

Up to 500 people a day may leave the island by boat for Antigua

Phil Davison
On board HMS Liverpool,
off Montserrat

Captain David Snelson thinks he and his 250 crewmen and women can cope with the volcano. But he is praying they don't get hit by a hurricane during their current operation.

The crew of the guided missile destroyer mobilised on board and onshore yesterday to

organise the evacuation of up to 3,000 Montserratians who wish to leave the island, probably beginning either today or tomorrow.

Barring hurricanes or strong tropical storms - the hurricane season is about to reach its peak - they hope to oversee the evacuation of 400-500 people a

day to neighbouring Antigua and complete the operation by the end of August.

The *Liverpool* lowered its "acrambling net" - a rope webbing for emergency boarding - and its "accommodation ladder", or vertical gangplank, yesterday for use in the event of a major volcanic eruption on the British Caribbean colony.

But the captain was confident the warship itself would not be needed to evacuate Montserratians. It will be used only if the volcano stages a major eruption and people flee to the shoreline in panic.

In that case, the ship's Lynx helicopter and two rigid inflatable boats would bring people on board but that would be a slow process and Capt. Nelson considers it an unlikely worst-case

scenario. "The Lynx can carry only four or five people and the RIBs (dinghies) only a few more. We carry guns, not boats," he told reporters on the vessel's forecastle, a mile off the lush shoreline of Little Bay in the north of the island.

Two or three small tour boats, carrying around 50 people each, will ferry evacuees to the nearby island of Antigua. A few may stay there but most are expected to wait in hotels, at Britain's expense, for up to three weeks while onward flights to Britain are arranged.

Royal Navy crewmen and women, in blue tropical uniforms and shorts, put up tents yesterday beside the jetty built in June to facilitate the evacuation. At least one *Liverpool* crew member with first-aid

training will travel on each ferry.

Capt. Nelson said he was annoyed by some British media coverage which suggested the *Liverpool* was here as part of "Palmerstonian gunboat" diplomacy while doing nothing to help Montserratians.

"In an emergency, we'd just pack everybody on board. On Families' Day in Portsmouth we had 550 people on board," he said.

"The hurricane season does pose a complication," the captain added. "You wouldn't want people out on ferries during a hurricane. But the Caribbean has good early warning on storms so might stop the evacuation, or speed it up."

He said that in the event of a major volcanic eruption,

"we'd weigh anchor and loiter a mile or two away".

Crewmen said the ship had had to install filters on air inlets after ash and grit from the volcano showered the warship recently. There was a strong smell of sulphur in the area, from the volcano, as the captain spoke.

In touching scenes onshore yesterday, scores of people registered for the voluntary evacuation. Kingsley Meade, a pentecostal preacher, said he hoped to get to Edmonton, north London, to live with his son. The registration form told him he could leave with only two suitcases.

Priscilla Allen, 63, was not worried about the suitcase quota. She could barely fill one with the things she was able to take when she fled her home in Streatham two years ago and moved from shelter to shelter since.

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Kurd extradited to Germany on terrorist charge

Jason Bernetto
Crime Correspondent

A Kurdish leader has been extradited to Germany to face charges of masterminding a series of terrorist attacks after spending 33 months in a British jail fighting deportation.

Supporters of Kani Yilmaz, European spokesman for the Kurdistan Workers' Party or PKK, which is fighting a guerrilla campaign against the Turkish authorities for Kurdish independence, yesterday accused the British government of supporting state terrorism.

Mr Yilmaz, 47, also known as Faysal Dunlayichi, is accused of playing a leading role in planning nearly 140 arson attacks on Turkish businesses, banks, travel agencies and other interests throughout Germany in 1993. The PKK are outlawed in Germany, where one man was killed in a restaurant arson. He was arrested in London outside the House of Commons in October 1994 as he was about to meet a Labour MP and a peer to discuss the Kurdish issue. He had been allowed into Britain on a number of occasions with

the permission of immigration officials.

Mr Yilmaz and his supporters, who include a number of Labour MPs, have been fighting a Germany extradition order, but Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, has agreed to it.

They believe he could face imprisonment in Germany for his political beliefs. He and other party members have highlighted widespread human rights abuses against the Kurds by the Turkish government.

His imprisonment at Belmarsh high security jail in south London led to street battles with Kurdish demonstrators and protests by more than 2,000 Kurds outside the Home Office.

Mark Campbell, a member of the Kurdistan Solidarity Committee, a campaign group in London, said that Mr Yilmaz, who arrived in Germany on Wednesday, was determined to fight his case in court.

He added: "There is supposed to be freedom of speech in Britain. A political representative should be allowed into this country to talk about peaceful solutions without fear of arrest."

significant shorts

Tobacco chief admits smoking-related deaths

About 100,000 Americans "might have" died from smoking-related diseases, the chairman of tobacco company Philip Morris conceded yesterday to lawyers suing his company. Geoffrey Bible made the surprise admission during questioning in preparation for trial of a lawsuit. Ron Motley, a lawyer representing Florida, called Mr Bible's statement a major breakthrough because, except for one maverick, other industry leaders have not made such a concession.

AP - West Palm Beach

N Korea faces more famine

Famine-stricken North Korea is expected to face more hard times next year because the current drought would seriously affect crops, South Korea's Unification Ministry said. The grain shortage was likely to rise to 2.6 million tonnes in 1998 from 2 million.

Reuters - Seoul

India U-turn over the Queen

The Queen can visit any part of India that she wants during her trip in October, Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral said in an apparent about-face in a controversy over the monarch's tour. "The main thing is that she is an honoured guest of India. We do not want any controversy during her visit," Mr Gujral said.

Reuters - New Delhi

Clinton postpones strike move

President Bill Clinton moved to postpone any strike at the Amtrak railroad by 60 days, acting two days after the Teamsters Union ended a disruptive two-week walkout at United Parcel Service (UPS). The President intervened by invoking the Railway Labor Act, a law that empowers him to prevent a disruption of interstate commerce.

Reuters - Edgartown, Massachusetts

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S Africa agrees arms spending spree

Mary Braid
Johannesburg

Britain expected to tender for business as minister reverses military decline

After three years of apocalyptic warnings that South Africa would soon be relying on leaking submarines and rusty planes to defend its borders, defence minister Joe Modise has persuaded President Nelson Mandela's government to embark on its first military spending spree.

Hard lobbying has produced a marked change of heart. In 1994 South Africa's purchase of four Corvettes - for which Britain's Yarrow shipyard was on a shortlist of two to build - was halted by the African National Congress on the grounds

the money would be better spent on schools and clinics.

But the Cape Town parliament has now endorsed defence department proposals to purchase four Corvettes, four submarines and other armaments; a plan already approved by President Mandela's cabinet.

Britain, Spain, Germany and France are expected to be among the countries to tender for the business.

Parliament's decision is regarded as a major victory for Mr Modise whose defence budget

has been slashed by 60 per cent since 1989. "He has lobbied hard to counter the arguments put forward in 1994," said former Brigadier Bill Sass, deputy director for the Institute of Security Studies. "Arguments about schools and clinics would not wash now... Most military analysts agree the South African defence force is in a bad condition. The navy's last warships were bought 25 years ago."

Mr Sass said military spending was essential if South Africa was to maintain its regional position.

"One of the reasons we keep shying away from peacekeeping is that we don't have the necessary equipment, particularly aircraft."

Not all the Institute's staff are as enthusiastic. Dr Jackie Cilliers, the director, has been arguing for months that with apartheid and the Cold War gone the South African National Defence Force should be fundamentally redefining itself. He recommends it focus on internal crime fighting and anti-illegal immigrant border patrol

since there is no immediate or medium term military threat from its neighbours.

But defence chiefs warn a military force cannot be built up overnight and South Africa should always be ready for unforeseen aggression.

Anticipating parliamentary approval, the international defence companies are already in South Africa pitching for business. "Overseas salesmen are already buying drinks for South African navy officers," said Mr Sass.

The military contracts involve billions of rands and lucrative international counter trade deals. Mr Sass said Britain was expected to put together a package to provide Corvettes, fighter aircraft and four surplus Upholder class submarines, which were built by Vickers for the British government in the mid-1990s for £600m but never went into operation.

South Africa's defence budget is 1.6 per cent of the country's gross domestic product. It reached an apartheid-era peak

of 4.5 per cent of GDP in 1989. The defence department is pushing for the budget to be raised to around 2 per cent; the level for which it claims many other countries settle.

The SANDF now composed of former guerrillas who fought apartheid and the soldiers who once defended it, is halving its personnel in line with Mr Modise's promise to create a leaner, cheaper, better equipped fighting force. While job cuts will bring savings which can be ploughed into new

equipment, Mr Modise has yet to clinch his bitter battle with finance minister Trevor Manuel for a gradual guaranteed increase in defence spending. According to Dr Cilliers, the SANDF's new spending will have to be gradual and initially on credit.

Given the SANDF's disreputable past the rehabilitation of the forces has proved a tricky business. Deputy defence minister Ronnie Kasrils promised earlier this year that SANDF had transformed itself and was no longer the "same old ravenous wolf plundering state coffers at the expense of the poor and needy".

Singapore leader in court battle

PM and opposition leader hire British lawyers to fight their case

Matthew Chance

In a defamation case which has struck at the heart of Singapore's autocratic leadership style, a leading British QC defending a veteran opposition figure is awaiting a court verdict after four days of bruising and - for Singapore - frank public debate.

Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong was accused by George Carman QC of "exaggerating" to the court for the purposes of "putting a shine" on his slander case against Joshua Jeyaratnam, the country's 71-year-old Workers' Party leader. Mr Jeyaratnam faces financial ruin and the effective end of his long political career if the court decides to award heavy financial damages to Mr Goh, over remarks made during last December's election campaign.

Mr Goh has contested and won two multi-million pound defamation cases against numerous political opponents and newspapers.

The prime minister says Mr Jeyaratnam lobbied a political "Molotov cocktail" at his leadership by announcing at an election rally the fact that an-

other opposition figure, Tang Liang Hong, had filed police reports against the ruling party. The reports were later made public on the orders of Mr Goh, who said he had nothing to hide.

"The original defamation, on the eve of polling day, to an audience hostile to the plaintiff, was calculated to whip up emotions and feeling against him and cause the maximum political damage and personal hurt," Mr Goh's British lawyer, Tom Shields, told a packed High Court in his summation.

In a searing attack on the prime minister's motives in bringing the matter to court, Mr Carman, 68, an Oxford-educated lawyer and one of Britain's most accomplished barristers, poured scorn on the politician's claim for damages, arguing that the statement to which the prime minister objected was not only true - a fact that Britain or the United States would in most cases be the ultimate defecce - but did the standing of the Singaporean government "no harm whatsoever".

"This case in justice, fairness and in reason should be dismissed in law," said Mr Carman, concluding that the prime minister's testimony had been "a piece of cheap melodrama" in reaction to "the normal cut and thrust of democratic politics".

He accused the prime minister of attempting to silence his critics through the courts.

Throughout the hearing, Mr Goh insisted that his purpose in coming to court was solely to protect his reputation and that of his party colleagues. But he testified that 1997 had been a good year, saying his standing in the world had not been injured.



George Carman QC: Accused PM of exaggerating to the court



A Cambodian girl being cooled down by her mother at the Kap Cherng camp in eastern Thailand. Bangkok officials have asked to meet Cambodian counterparts to discuss the rapidly rising number of refugees. Photograph: Reuters

Siew is named as Taiwan's prime minister

Teresa Poole
Peking

Taiwan's President, Lee Teng-hui, yesterday named Vincent Siew as his new prime minister, paving the way for a government reshuffle aimed at restoring the popularity of the ruling Kuomintang (KMT) party.

The switch will allow the outgoing prime minister, Lien Chan, who is also deputy president, to spend more time repairing his low public ratings ahead

of presidential elections due in 2000, when he is likely to emerge as the KMT's candidate. Mr Lee has said he will not stand again and has been grooming Mr Lien as his successor.

Mr Siew, 58, will take up his post on 1 September after next week's KMT annual party congress approves the appointment. He will be the first Taiwan-born prime minister since the KMT fled to Taiwan in 1949, and also the first prime minister to have been popularly elected to the legislature. Mr Siew

(pronounced Shao) led Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council in 1994-5 and last year he ran Mr Lee's successful campaign in the presidential elections.

Earlier yesterday, Mr Lien and his whole cabinet tendered their resignations to make way for the expected cabinet reshuffle. Mr Lien, 60, had wanted to give up the prime ministership when he was elected deputy president last year, and again offered to resign earlier this year after a spate of high-profile murders and kidnappings re-

sulted in public demonstrations of 50,000 protesters against the government's inability to deal with crime. Most grisly was the kidnapping and murder of a television celebrity's 17-year-old daughter, Pai Hsiao-yen, whose body was found naked in a drain.

Fighting crime will remain high on the agenda for the new government, especially after a gun battle in Taipei this week when one of Ms Pai's kidnappers was killed, but two managed to escape a massive police cordon. Last

week Taiwan's top police officer, the National Police Administration director Yao Kao-chiao resigned after the same gang abducted and tortured a local businessman.

Mr Siew's experience on mainland affairs will stand him in good stead for further wrangles with Peking as China becomes more aggressive about wanting a timetable for reunification. This week Peking dismissed an offer from Taipei to reopen talks, which have been suspended for two years.

Change to Interest Rates.

With effect from the start of business on 22nd August 1997 the following Business Cheque and Deposit rates are applicable to the accounts set out below:

	Rate per Annum	
GROSS %	GROSS*	C.A.R. %

Business Interest Cheque Account

Instant Access Cheque Account

£250,000+	3.60	3.65
£100,000-249,999	3.20	3.24
£50,000-99,999	2.70	2.73
£10,000-49,999	2.35	2.37
£2,000-9,999	1.90	1.91
£1-1,999	1.20	1.21

Schools Banking Account

	4.95	5.04
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Capital Reserve Account**

£250,000+	5.70	5.82
£100,000-249,999	5.50	5.61
£50,000-99,999	5.20	5.30
£10,000-49,999	4.80	4.89
£2,000-9,999	4.40	4.47
£1-1,999	4.40	4.47

Practice Call Account†

	5.30	5.41
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Designated Clients Account

£100,000+	5.30	5.41
£50,000-99,999	5.10	5.20
£10,000-49,999	4.85	4.94
£2,000-9,999	3.45	3.49
£1-1,999	1.95	1.96

Business Call Account

£250,000+	4.30	4.37
£50,000-249,999	4.10	4.16
£10,000-49,999	3.75	3.80
£1,000-9,999	3.45	3.49
£1-999	3.20	3.24

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President Mohammad Khatami addressing the Majlis on 20th August. He won approval for his cabinet only after 20 hours of stormy debate. Photograph: AP

Iran's revolution prepares to take a democratic turn

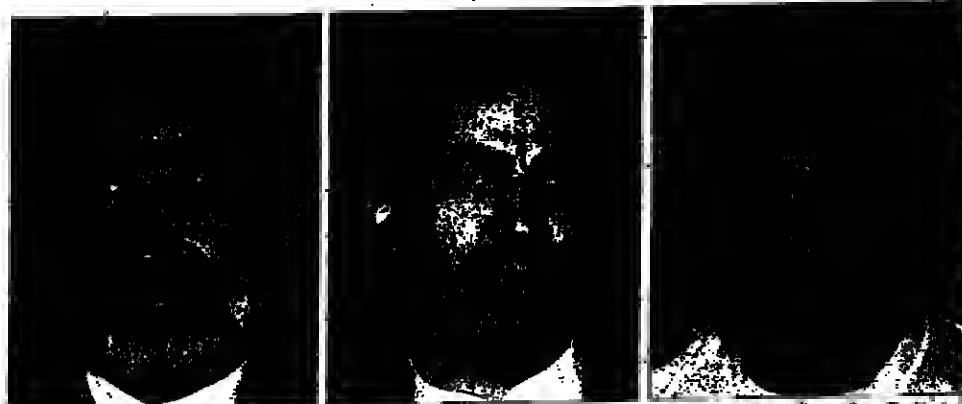
The west may be missing a historical opportunity for rapprochement with Tehran, writes **Robert Fisk**

President Mohamed Khatami's new government – approved in its entirety by the "majlis" (parliament) in Tehran on Wednesday – offers an unprecedented moment for the West to come to terms with the nation which overthrew the Shah and destroyed American prestige in the Middle East almost two decades ago. But already Washington seems set on destroying the chances of a rapprochement.

The initial US reaction to the new administration in Tehran was as predictable as it was misguided. The US would open a dialogue, according to the State Department, if Iran would discuss nuclear weapons, "terrorism" and the "peace process". Since Iran will no more talk about its nuclear weapons (if any) than Israel, and since the American definition of "terrorism" is somewhat different to Iran's, and because Iran regards the "peace process" as dead, this

was as good as slamming the door on any relationship between Washington and Tehran. In the Iranian capital, serious men (and at least one woman) are trying to democratise the Islamic republic and to give their people both intellectual and physical freedom: an end to censorship, to unjust imprisonment and secret executions, an end to dictatorial clerical rule and seventh century punishments.

When I met Ayatollah Mojtahedi last year, he spoke at length about the need for unity in Iran – about the avoidance of political division within the state – but showed himself well-read in Western literature and politics. Now he is the powerful new minister of culture and Islamic guidance, a department whose name he may well choose to alter but which has the ability to allow Iranian newspapers and television some real freedom of expression.



Left to right: Kamal Kharrazi, Foreign minister, Ataollah Mohajerani, Minister for Culture and Islamic Guidance, and Rear-Admiral Ali Shamkhani, defence minister

Ali Fallahian, the intelligence minister who was named by a German court in April as organising the assassination of Kurdish dissidents in Berlin, has been sacked, to be replaced by another student of the West, Qorbanali Dori Najafabadi. Najafabadi may not be the happiest choice for the job – he talks of an all-pervasive intelligence service within Iran. But could there be a more obvious symbol than Mr Fallahian's dismissal of Mr Khatami's desire to distance himself from Iran's war against armed opponents of the regime? Europe's ambassadors, who were withdrawn after the German court verdict, will not flock back to Tehran within days. But they may reflect that the country they do eventually return to has been changed utterly by the elections of 23 May.

It would be pleasant, of course, if Tehran would address the West's immediate concerns: the role of the Iranian secret service in overseas assassinations, the "fatwa" against Salman Rushdie, its support for those who not only oppose the now-dead Arab-Israeli "peace process" but do so with bombs. But President Khatami was elected by 69 per cent of Iran's voters to give his people freedom from the dictatorial rule of cler-

ics whose literal-minded interpretation of the Koran made a mockery of Islamic freedoms (and women's rights), and to open up the economy – not to turn Iran into an American satellite.

Kamal Kharrazi, the foreign minister, has always favoured intellectual "dialogue" with the United States – and, given the threats made against him, paid a high price for saying so. But this does not mean that Iran wishes to support US policy in the Middle East, least of all Washington's uncritical support for Israel. The new government may wish to engage in talks with the US about the future of the region, as it already does with the Arab Gulf states; it is not, however, going to withdraw its support for the Hizbollah guerrillas in Lebanon so that Israel's occupation of the south of the country is made easier.

After almost 20 years of brutalisation of Iran – along with Iraq, Sudan, Libya and other pariah states – those Americans who visit Iran invariably find themselves faced with a contradiction. The nation boasts what is arguably the most democratic – or least undemocratic – parliament in the Middle East. Women are forced to wear the "chador", but they can drive cars, take senior jobs in the

civil service and work alongside men – something which is not vouchsafed to women in America's much loved ally, Saudi Arabia. Tehran magazines now publish interviews with – and sometimes by – American academics. At Tehran university last year, I watched students debating, in flawless English, the work of American linguists and philosophers.

The new government is burdened with a history it might wish to forget: the anti-Rushdie "fatwa", the takeover of the US embassy, the mass execution of 8,000, some say – of political prisoners in 1988. It is not easy to make amends without damaging the memory of the man who remains beyond criticism in Iran: Ayatollah Khomeini.

Ironically, the only gesture towards the new government in Tehran has come from the one nation it will not recognise: Israel. Within hours of the Khatami government's confirmation, Israel pulled an anti-Iranian television station off its satellite transmissions, thus preventing the most violent of Tehran's enemies from inciting their countrymen to violence on the screen. The West, meanwhile, continues to support those who wish to overthrow the Iranian government by violent means.

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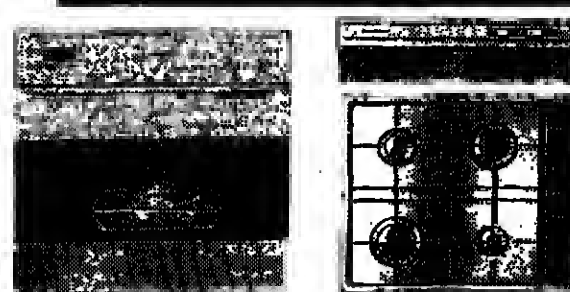
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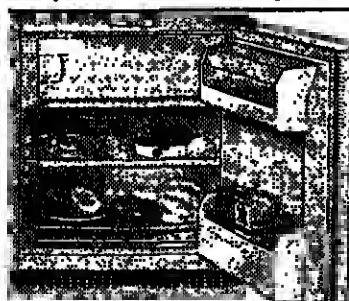
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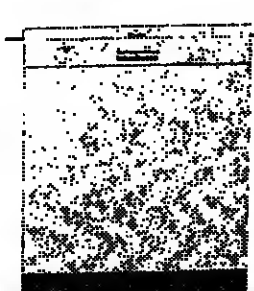
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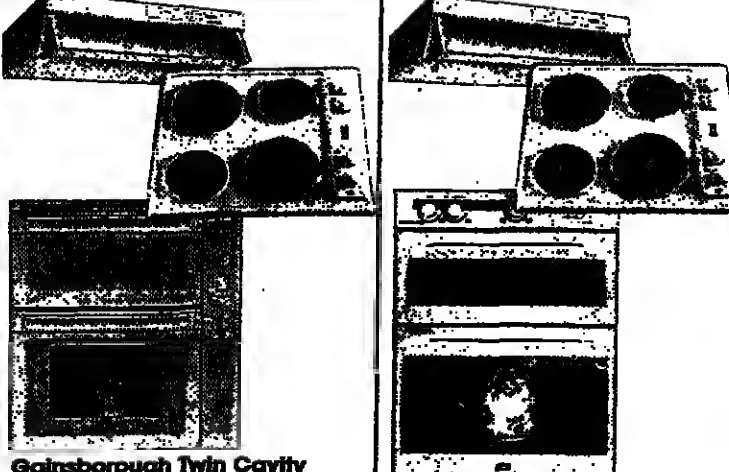
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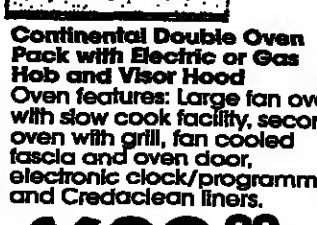
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Young give Pope a pop star's welcome to Paris

Joanna Lee
Paris
and agencies

The Pope won a pop star's welcome from 500,000 young people at a world youth festival in Paris yesterday as a new opinion poll showed most French youths felt religion was irrelevant.

He became a huge crowd by the Eiffel Tower cheered, stamped and waved flags at almost every word he said. The Pope asked: "Why did [engineer Gustave] Eiffel build this tower? To have a great meeting here of world youth." Calling the festival a "vast gathering of hope", the Pope earlier told French President Jacques

Chirac the young faced a difficult search for physical and spiritual well-being in a world scarred by violence, unemployment and poverty.

"Wherever people are suffering, wherever they are humiliated by poverty or injustice and wherever a mockery is made of their rights, make it your task to serve them," the Pope said.

French political leaders have shied away from such meetings in the past, because of the Vatican's opposition to French legislation on abortion and the strong secular traditions of the French Republic. The Interior Minister Jean Pierre Chevènement has argued that neither the

meeting nor the event itself threatened this principle of secularism and sees the festival as "a great event for France, rather like the World Cup" that will take place in France next year.

The organisation of the festival has been marred by worries over the demise of Catholicism in France. Less than a third of the festival crowd were native French. Many young people are going less frequently to mass and are ignoring Catholic dogma. This is in large part due to the Catholic Church's teaching on contraception and abortion. Bertrand Robert, 20, a history student in Paris described the Catholic teachings as "authoritarian, inflexible and out-dated".

the Goldfish card

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Destiny day in mission to save Mir



Helen Womack
Moscow

The two Russian cosmonauts on the ageing Mir complex will today take a risky "internal space walk" into the dark vacuum of the depressurised Spektr module in an attempt to repair damage which has left the station half-crippled since a collision in June.

Throughout the operation Michael Foale, the British-born guest astronaut from Nasa, will sit in the escape capsule to which his crewmates, Anatoly Solovyov and Pavel Vinogradov, would beat a hasty retreat if an emergency meant they had to evacuate Mir. But both Russian and US space officials expressed confidence yesterday that the repairs would succeed and give the 11-year-old station a new lease of life.

Mir, which has suffered a string of technical faults because, on their own admission, the Russians are saving money by only replacing spare parts when they break down instead of when they reach the end of their life expectancy, lost half its power in June when a Progress cargo craft hit and dented Spektr.

The module had to be disconnected from the mother ship and stopped contributing its share of energy from the solar panels which cover the entire exterior of Mir.

The aim of today's repairs is to reconnect the cables between Mir and Spektr. But the task is a good deal trickier than putting plugs back into sockets. Because Spektr is airless, Solovyov and Vinogradov can only enter it wearing oxygen-giving suits of the kind they would put on to walk in open space.

Igor Goncharov, the chief doctor at Mission Control, said the "internal space walk" was easier than leaving the space ship from a psychological point of view because there would be "no hanging in space, no seeing the Earth below your feet". But it will be more difficult in physical terms.

The Russian-made Orlan space suits are bulky, the passage into Spektr is narrow, the module itself has little room for cat-swinging and debris such as broken glass could be floating around inside. David Wolf, the US astronaut training to replace Foale, ripped his glove during a simulation of the Spektr operation in a swimming pool at Star City outside Moscow this week.

If the cosmonauts tear their suits for real today, they will have little chance of surviving.

Commander Solovyov, who has 43 hours of space-walking experience, will bear the main burden of the work, gliding into Spektr feet-first while Vinogradov gives him support from behind. Foale will sit in the Soyuz rocket but not in a space suit.

"If something goes seriously wrong," said Valery Ryumin, head of the Mir-Nasa programme, "all three cosmonauts will have to abandon Mir in the Soyuz."

Mission Control was not anticipating problems. The computer failure which earlier this week forced the crew to save energy by switching off all but life-support systems was corrected. Mir recovered its orientation in relation to the sun and recharged its batteries. The spacemen also recharged their by resting yesterday and going to bed early ahead of the repairs which were due to start first thing in the morning.



Dress rehearsal: David Wolf, the US astronaut scheduled to replace Michael Foale on board Mir, donning a spacesuit during a weightlessness training exercise at Mission Control in Russia. Photograph: Reuters

Yeltsin joins trend of tighter arms exports

Christopher Bellamy
Defence Correspondent

Boris Yeltsin yesterday fired the chief of Russian arms exports, appointed a new supreme commander of the aircraft industry, and ordered a series of measures to tighten state control over the arms business - the country's principal earner of hard currency.

Mr Yeltsin fired Alexander Kotelnik, chief of the Rosvooruzheniye (Russian Armaments) state weapons export company, only a day after officials reported they expected to make more than \$4bn (£2.5bn) from arms sales this year. Last year, Russia was the world's third biggest arms exporter, with exports worth \$4.6bn, just behind Britain's \$4.8bn. Top was the United States, exporting \$11.3bn worth of arms.

Mr Kotelnik's place Mr Yeltsin has appointed Yevgeny Ananov, a former chairman of the Mapo bank which is linked with the company that builds the Mikoyan-Gurevich (MiG) range of combat aircraft.

The Presidential decrees issued yesterday transformed Rosvooruzheniye into a new state company bearing the same name but with greater government control. Two other state-run companies, Promexport and the new "Russian Technologies Company" were also granted the status of official weapons exporters. Promexport will handle selling military equipment made obsolete by Russia's planned military reforms, and Russian Technologies will handle the provision of military expertise necessary to operate equipment. Rosvooruzheniye will continue to handle the export of most new weapons systems.

Russia seems to be taking a leaf out of its Western competitors' book. Shortly after Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, announced a new "ethical" approach to arms exports, and with the US Congress fi-

nalising a new "code of conduct" on arms exports, Mr Yeltsin said he would personally approve all weapons export, until a detailed list of items allowed to be sold and of approved customers is finalised.

Mr Yeltsin has also ordered the newly appointed chief of Promexport, Vyacheslav Filimonov, to devise new measures to facilitate exports. According to Rosvooruzheniye's deputy director, Oleg Sidorenko, Russia is aiming to export arms to the Persian Gulf, elsewhere in the Middle East and Latin America, as well as its traditional customers, India and China.

Third world countries often need help to pay for their arms through export credit guarantees.

Mr Sidorenko said that although the US is by far the world's biggest arms exporter - Russia might "catch up by 2001" - though Western experts doubt it. Russia's economy is in crisis and although some of its armaments are superb there are doubts about Russia's ability to provide after-sales service.

Yesterday, Russia unveiled a new anti-aircraft and anti-missile system, an updated version of the S-300, known to Nato as the SA-12 "Grumble", which is similar to the US Patriot. Russia recently did a deal to sell S-300s to the Greek Cypriots, which has greatly angered the Turks. The new S-300, called Favorit, has a longer range - 125 miles - and a more powerful warhead than earlier versions.

■ Kiev (AP) - Ukraine's top arms sales official defended his country's deals to repair Soviet-made tanks for Syria, saying the refurbished equipment would not heighten tensions on the Israeli border. Ukraine recently returned more than 100 T-55MV tanks to Syria after repairing them under a 1995 contract to fix 200 of the vehicles, said Andriy Kukin, director of the arms sales co-ordination body Ukrspetsexport.

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Peace-keepers move in to halt Serb civil war

Tensions mount between rival factions in Pale and Banja Luka

Christopher Bellamy

The international community pulled together yesterday to try to prevent a civil war breaking out in Serb-controlled Bosnia. Tensions were feared to be mounting between supporters of Biljana Plavsic, the elected President of the Bosnian Serb mini-state "Republika Srpska" - and those still loyal to ex-president and indicted war criminal Radovan Karadzic, including Momcilo Krajisnik, the Serb member of the three-man Presidency of all Bosnia.

On Wednesday, international peace-keepers moved in to Banja Luka in north-west Bosnia to block a possible coup by police opposed to Ms Plavsic, seizing 2,500 illegally held arms and quantities of bagging equipment.

There had been fears that Russia - a member of the five-nation "contact group", along with the US, Britain, France and Germany - would break with the other members over the conduct of elections for a parliamentary assembly due to be held on 11-12 October. But yesterday a meeting of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), held in Vienna, ended on an optimistic note.

The OSCE's main role is in the peace-building process in the monitor elections.

Russia, which had opposed OSCE participation in the October elections, "took a flexible position", diplomatic sources said. "They said Plavsic's efforts to implement the [November 1995] Dayton peace accord deserve our support. The idea of holding elections is a good one and the OSCE should continue its preparatory work."

The Danish chairman said all the delegates now thought OSCE involvement was a good idea.

Wednesday's dramatic operation, in which British and

Czech ground troops and US gunship helicopters disarmed Bosnian Serb police opposed to Ms Plavsic was a clear intervention in what might have become a civil war between rival Bosnian Serb factions. Yesterday morning the international stabilisation force - S-For - was on tenterhooks, wondering whether armed opposition would break out. Plavsic's opponents condemned her as a collaborator, and even compared her to Italian dictator Benito Mussolini. Karadzic supporters issued a proclamation describing the move into Banja Luka as "an attempt at foreign occupation" and condemning Plavsic as a traitor.

Later in the day the UN's International Police Task Force continued going through the material seized in the five police depots in Banja Luka on Wednesday.

The haul included rocket launchers, thousands of rounds of ammunition, hand grenades and, "a couple of items that belong more in a James Bond movie than in a police station", according to UN spokesman Alexander Ivanko. Under the Dayton agreement the Bosnian Serb police are allowed side arms but not "long-barrelled weapons" - rifles - let alone rocket launchers. The items included booby-trapped pens, plastic explosives and fake UN licence plates.

International diplomats believe Ms Plavsic, who was democratically elected in September last year, can be trusted and hope she will help find and extradite war crimes suspects Karadzic and Ratko Mladic.

US envoy Robert Gelbard blamed Krajisnik and Karadzic for creating "an extremely dangerous situation" by "refusing to permit the rule of law and the exercise of democracy and democratic institutions".

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Sunday 24 August	LISTINGS SUPPLEMENT (TEACHING TRAINING)
Tuesday 26 August	LISTINGS SUPPLEMENT (SCIENCE & ENGINEERING)
Thursday 28 August	LISTINGS SUPPLEMENT (AGRICULTURE)
Sunday 31 August	LISTINGS SUPPLEMENT (LANGUAGES)
Wednesday 3 September	LISTINGS SUPPLEMENT (SCIENCE & ENGINEERING)
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obituaries / gazette

Rob Parker

Rob Parker, one of the world's foremost cave explorers, lost his life during a dive into a deep underwater cave system off the Bahamian Island of South Andros.

He was best known in Britain as the man who, in 1985, created a new depth record on an epic pushing dive (a dive into an unexplored cave) deep into the complex of flooded tunnels at Woolley Hole Caves in Somerset. In recent years his reputation also grew through his passion for climbing and his work as an adventure film cameraman.

Born in Bournemouth in 1962, Parker established an early interest in adventure sports and became a familiar figure climbing on the cliffs of the Dorset coastline. A later move to Bristol, with the Mendips hills nearby, saw the beginning of a deep and passionate interest in caves, and at a relatively young age he established himself as one of the country's top cave explorers.

Parker was originally enticed into Woolley's complex of flooded passages whilst supporting a series of explorations by his cave-diving mentor, Maryn Farr, and he soon became fascinated by the prospect of continuing that exploration beyond the limits imposed by the technologies of the day. In 1984 Parker's thirst for adventure took him to Mexico to work with the top American cave diver Bill Stone, a relationship which endured for the remain-

der of his life. The following year, Stone came to the UK to act as a support diver and technical adviser for Parker's own explorations to the limits of the Woolley system.

This expedition, despite taking place in Somerset, was to a place as remote and inhospitable as any mountain range. A carefully co-ordinated team of divers ferried sealed containers of equipment to an underground camp in an air chamber close to the limit of the previous exploration. Diving from this base, Parker moved alone, turning back only at the record depth of 63m, at a point where the full force of the River Axe blasts through loose gravel. Parker's pioneering adoption of commercial mixed gas diving technology, blending helium, nitrogen and oxygen to enable the safe exploration of such deep caves, proved a milestone in the development of sport diving in the UK and established the record which still stands today.

In the following years he undertook numerous projects at home and abroad, exploring caves both above and below water. He played a leading role in explorations from the Bahamian Blue Holes to the uncharted caves of Communist China and his reputation quickly grew at an international level. Fascinated by the possibilities that technology could offer in advancing cave exploration, he teamed up again with Stone and other US divers to explore one



Parker created a new depth level on an epic dive at Woolley Hole Caves, Somerset; above, diving in Florida. Photograph: Gavin Newman

of the world's deepest and largest underwater caves at Wakulla Springs in northern Florida in 1987.

This ground-breaking project coupled the new mixed gas diving technology with futuristic underwater scooters and a specially designed diving bell. Such an infrastructure allowed divers who were returning from very deep dives to spend the long hours of decompression in relative safety and comfort. The expedition also saw the first test dives of a revolutionary new re-

breather system designed by Stone. Similar to the systems used by astronauts it allowed divers to remain underwater for up to 24 hours at a time. Parker played a major part in the equipment's development for cave exploration and was to have been a lead diver using the system to further the exploration of Wakulla Springs later this year.

In recent years, he turned his attention back to climbing and, together with his long-term climbing and diving partner, Ju-

lian Walker, set up the Bristol Climbing Centre in 1992. In yet another innovative venture, he designed and built the technically challenging and beautifully sculpted climbing wall inside a redundant Bristol church. This project provided the perfect outlet for the unique combination of his skills as a carpenter and his creative vision as an adventurer.

A firm believer in taking charge of one's own destiny and living life to the full, he was an inspiration to all who met him.

Several television films stand as tribute to his extraordinary adventures, although in later years he was more often found behind the camera. From the slopes of Everest to the depths of the world's great caves, he was quickly becoming recognised as one of the world's most adventurous film cameramen.

Gavin Newman

Robert Bernard Parker, cave explorer and climber; born Bournemouth, Hampshire 10 June 1962; died 17 August 1997.

Yuri Nikulin

Not only was Yuri Nikulin one of the most-honoured artists of the Moscow State Circus, he was also a film star in his native country, and was eventually appointed director of the circus, a position he held from 1984 until his death.

In the ring, Nikulin presented a phlegmatic character, slow and unsmiling, and to many in the West his personality was reminiscent of the great silent film comedian Buster Keaton. Rich in mimicry, devoid of expression, Nikulin was hailed as "a brainy clown" outside Russia, simple in style and gentle with children, with a reddeared nose and eyes lined in black his only vestiges of make-up, so different to the grotesques of Western circuses.

Although he worked extensively in Western Europe and America and Canada, his one appearance in England was from 20 May to 1 July 1961, when he was featured in the Moscow State Circus staged at the Wembley Empire Pool by the impresario Tom Arnold. Nikulin, along with his partner Mikhail Shuidin, assisted the favourite clown of the Soviet Union, Karandash.

Karandash, who held the title of "People's Artist of the

USSR", had led the development of Russian clowning away from the coarse buffoonery generally expected, to a simpler and more naturalistic form of humour. Both Oleg Popov, now the most famous of all Russian circus clowns, and Nikulin started their clown careers as assistants to the great Karandash.

Nikulin, who was born in Smolensk in 1921, studied to be a clown at the famous Moscow State Circus school and like Popov joined the circus itself under Karandash's guidance. In 1950, Popov had the distinction of being the very first Russian circus to tour the West in 1956, being hailed as a young comic genius following his appearances in Manchester and London.

Nikulin followed in 1961, and was so highly regarded by the Soviet authorities that he was allowed to go on tours of the Russian circus to Australia and New Zealand (in 1965 and 1974), to the United States and Canada (1967/68), France (1969/70) and even to Finland (1977).

Nikulin's path to fame was a long and difficult one. He had once dreamed of becoming a cinema actor, but had not been

accepted by the Institute of Cinematography in Russia. When he became a clown, he teamed up with Mikhail Shuidin and they together revived the popular comic characters Pat and Patachon in the ring.

Nikulin and Shuidin first met each other after the Second World War. Nikulin spent part of the time during the war on the border with Finland, as a senior sergeant in artillery reconnaissance, and was awarded some of the Soviet Union's highest honours, among them the Hero of Socialist Labour and the Order of Lenin. Shuidin was the commander of a T-34 tank, and both of them had seen hard fighting and gained valuable experience of life at its most tough.

When they met at the circus clown studio at the Moscow Circus, they found it staffed with excellent trainers who passed on to pupils all the creative experience and traditions of the Soviet circus, learning most from Karandash. Nikulin and Shuidin were quick to master the main principals which Karandash stressed in his teaching - that a good clown must first and foremost be a skilled dramatic actor, sincere and honest in his art.

From their debut in the autumn of 1950, they were established as a popular clown duo, and Nikulin's own personal popularity grew immensely when he made a successful screen debut in the film *A Girl with a Gun*, playing the comic role of a pyrotechnist. In 1958, this was followed by roles in *Yasha Toporkov*, *Nadya's Chaperon*, *The Dog Barkov* and *The Unusual Cross*. Men of Affairs and other films. His roles in the films *When the Trees Were Tall* and *Horse, Muktari*, showed new facets of Nikulin's talents as an actor. In 1967 he starred in *Caucasian Prisoner*, playing the leader of an incompetent trio of crooks and in *Diamond Arm* (1968) he played a mild-mannered man who gets caught up in a diamond smuggling scheme. He also starred in the gloomy - yet widely acclaimed - film *Twenty Days Without War*, in 1977.

His typical film roles portrayed him as a slightly silly, average person, witty but never mean-spirited, and in the West he has been compared with Cantinflas and Fernandel as well as Jacques Tati. He was also to become the star of many television shows and to children in the Soviet Union he was known



Nikulin: "a brainy clown"

simply as "Uncle Yuri". Many of his most famous lines in films became part of the national culture. He had a vast private collection of jokes, which newspapers frequently printed the best of them.

Nikulin's popularity from the circus ring to the big screen and television spanned the generations, from little children to their grandparents, helping to create for him a universal appeal considered rare in the Soviet Union. Earlier this summer, Nikulin himself said: "I'm sure that humour helps people survive the difficulties of life. Laughter helps those who are suffering."

Despite his film success, Nikulin returned to the Old Circus Building in Moscow to become its Artistic Director from 1982 to 1984, after which he was appointed its overall director, working hard to reinvigorate the popularity of the most-loved of Russian entertainments. He remained in this post long after most would have retired and last December, the circus held a grand celebration in honour of his 75th birthday. A sprained ankle prevented the Mayor of Moscow, Yuri Luzhkov, from performing a planned trapeze act in homage to Nikulin.

Nikulin and Shuidin enriched the art of contemporary circus clowning in the Soviet Circus through their skills as satirists, mastering the techniques and skill of the dramatic actor to reveal the inner world, the psychological depths of human characters. This was the distinctive and novel feature which gave their duo in the arena such impact and appeal not only in Russia but around the world.

D. Nevil

Yuri Nikulin, clown and actor; born Smolensk 18 December 1921; married (one son); died Moscow 21 August 1997.

John Elliot

John Elliot was one of the BBC's most versatile and conscientious producers of drama and documentaries.

He is remembered as a very good producer of many of the Wednesday Plays, and as the author of *Mogul*, which began in 1965 as 13 dramas about the oil industry and then was converted into the series of a further 123 episodes of *The Troubleshooters*, mainly produced by Tony Read, the original story editor. He also produced the outstanding series of film documentaries *The War in the Air*.

After schooling at Berkhamsted, Elliot was reading English at King's College London when the Second World War was declared. He was opposed to the idea of killing anyone himself, so he immediately volunteered for the Royal Army Medical Corps. As a corporal he was involved in the evacuation from Dunkirk. He served in the Mid-

dle East and in 1942 was commissioned and transferred to become the Public Relations Officer for the Commander-in-Chief, Ceylon.

Shortly after VJ Day he married Elizabeth Haynes, who had been a fellow student at King's College. He worked for a year in the Public Relations Directorate at the War Office, was demobilised in the War Office, and then joined a small film company which made a promotional film explaining how television worked. This led him into the BBC's film department, then based at Alexandra Palace, and he soon made his mark as a sequence manager. He worked on *Television News* and in 1952 was given the task of preparing the obituary of King George VI.

The following year Elliot embarked on a major film documentary series. The Americans had made a series of films *Victory at Sea*, chronicling the



Elliot: talented pioneer

story of sea-power in the Hitler war, seen through American eyes. Elliot engaged Air Chief Marshal Sir Philip Joubert as the full-time technical adviser on a series of films he wrote telling the story of

air power from its rise in 1914 to the explosion of the Atom Bomb in 1945. It was the first major series about the Second World War made by British television. Sir Arthur Bliss, the Master of the Queen's Music composed the musical motif.

Elliot edited a film about Henry Moore which won a Venice Film Festival Award in 1953. The following year he was seconded to the United Nations in New York as Film and Television Liaison Officer, and on his return became a scriptwriter/producer in the BBC Drama Department.

In addition to the highly successful *Mogul* and *Troubleshooters* series he wrote the 13-part *Fall of Eagles* (1974) about the collapse of the Russian, German and Austro-Hungarian empires after the First World War which was sold to more countries abroad than any other BBC pro-

gramme. His programme *A Man from the Sun* produced in 1955 was the first especially made for West Indians, and was followed in 1982 by *Ebony*, with black writers and reporters. When Desmond Hawkins, the founder of the Natural History Unit at Bristol, was sent to London on a television course, he was attached to Elliot for training and the two became firm friends. Hawkins became Head of Programmes at Bristol in 1955 and two years later was made the South and West Controller. For his successor as Programme Head he chose Elliot, whose reputation at Television Centre ensured that Bristol's regional offerings would be assured of proper consideration for the national network.

When Hawkins retired at the beginning of 1970, Elliot was his natural successor, but at that time the whole future of BBC regional controllerships was

being reconsidered and John Elliot was merely made Acting Controller. For three months he held out in the hope of achieving the position he richly deserved. But then his patience gave out. He resigned and became one of the first television producers to form himself into a limited company. He went on making programmes, often for regional television. He was one of the medium's most talented pioneers.

Leonard Miall

John Herbert Elliot, television drama and documentary producer; born Reading 4 July 1918; Film and Sequence Manager, BBC 1949-54, seconded to United Nations, New York 1954-55, Head of Programmes, West Region 1967-69, Acting Controller, South and West Region 1970; married 1945 Elizabeth Haynes (two daughters, and one son deceased); died Bristol 14 August 1997.

Grand Ayatollah Rohani

Grand Ayatollah Muhammad Rohani was one of the principal religious scholars and jurists of Shia Islam.

As a *marja* (religious authority), numerous Imami - Twelver Shia Muslims - followed his directives in the practical application of their faith. He was a *sayyid* and thus a direct descendant of the Prophet Muhammad, and his genealogy can be traced back to the Prophet's great-grandson, Ali Zayn al-Abidin, the fourth Imam of the Ahl al-Bayt (the progeny of the Prophet). His father, Sayyid Mahmud, was a prominent scholar who played an instrumental role in founding the modern Theological Academy (the *Hawzeh-yi Elmiah*) at Qum, in Iran, and his grandfather Sayyid Muhammad Sadiq, who died in the year of Rohani's birth, was a great *marja* and leader of the *ulema* (the religious scholars) in Qum.

With such a background, it is not surprising that he embarked, when a young boy, upon a traditional religious education. In his mid-teens he travelled to Iraq to complete his studies. He studied for a while at Karbala under Sayyid Muhammad Hadi Milani after which he moved to the 1,000-year-old *Hawzah* at Najaf (throughout history, the principal seat of learning for Shia Islam). There his teachers, among them the great *marja* Shaykh Muhammad Husayn al-Isfahani, were quick to recognise the intellectual potential of this gifted young man.

For his advanced studies, Rohani was a pupil of the late Sayyid Abul-Qasim al-Khoi, who was to become one of the most renowned *marjas* of modern times. These latter studies under Khoi lasted seven years: only three other students shared this great privilege with Rohani throughout this time. The close pupil-teacher relationship between Rohani and Khoi developed later into a friendship and close scholarly co-operation which continued uninterrupted until the death of Khoi in 1992.

Not yet 30, Rohani was a *mujtahid* (competent to make independent juridical decisions) and was well known throughout Najaf both as a scholar and teacher of exceptional ability. It was unusual for a man of his age to be recognised already as an authority in his chosen specialised fields of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and the bases of jurisprudence (*usul al-fiqh*). His precision and exactitude attracted only the most brilliant students and those with the most stamina since his course would last 13 years instead of the normal six or seven.

Among Rohani's students were numbered Sayyid Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, the future philosopher and intellectual who was murdered by the Baathist regime while in prison, Sayyid Abd al-Sabir al-Hakim (the son of Khoi's predecessor, Grand Ayatollah Muhsin al-Hakim), who suffered the same fate as al-Sadr, and the two Lebanese Shia leaders Shaykh Mahdi Shams al-Din and Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadl-Allah.

Rohani refused to be drawn into any political activity. This was the traditional standpoint of most of the Imami Shia *ulema*. While in Iraq, he never co-operated with the Baathist regime and in Qum he distanced himself from the Iranian revolutionary government but did not speak out publicly against it. Nevertheless, it was no secret that he did not subscribe to the concept of *velayat-e-mutlaq-e-faqih*, known popularly as simply *velayat-e-faqih*, that he did not believe that an Islamic state should be governed by a jurist (*faqih*) who exerts absolute (*mutlaq*) power and demands an absolute allegiance; privileges which, in the opinion of his mentor Khoi and the vast majority of the Shia scholars, are the prerogatives alone of the Prophet Muhammad and the 12 infallible Imams. The concept of *velayat-e-faqih* was adopted by the late Sayyid Ruhollah Khomeini as the basis of the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

In 1976, Rohani together with other Shia *ulema* was expelled from Iraq by the Baathist regime. He returned to his native Qum, where he taught the *Hawzeh* until his death. Such was his self-effacing character and humility that he refused to be known as a *marja* nor did he disseminate his juridical decisions until the death of his beloved Khoi.

Rohani as *marja* had a following throughout the world. Although many of the Shia *ulema* mostly in Iran itself thought Rohani to be the most knowledgeable of all the *marjas* of his day and thus the most worthy to be followed by Shia Muslims, the Iranian leadership did not, for obviously political reasons, ever recognise his status as *marja* although, paradoxically, they never would have dared to question his academic excellence. Despite the restrictions imposed upon him, Rohani managed to keep in constant contact with his followers, especially by means of his representatives abroad who had established offices in Kuwait, the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, Syria, London, Los Angeles and elsewhere.

In addition to his published *Risalah* (the collection of his juridical edicts) in two volumes in 1992, called *Minhaj al-Salihin*, Rohani was the author of many



Rohani: approachable

and abridged versions of it in Arabic and Persian as well as a book on the rituals of the Pilgrimage to Mecca, Rohani completed some 14 works on topics relating to jurisprudence, most of which remain in manuscript form, several of them in his own hand.

Rohani was a man of considerable kindness and generosity, had a great sense of humour and was approachable to all. Above all, he was a man of faith. About seven years ago, his daughter, mother-in-law and brother-in-law were killed in a car crash in Iran on the Mashad-Tehran road. Rohani in another car arrived on the scene of the accident a few minutes later. His self-control and composure after this tragic incident and the fact that he busied himself looking after the many visitors who subsequently came to Qum to proffer him their condolences testify to his heroic submission to Divine Providence.

The Iranian authorities delayed the announcement of Grand Ayatollah Rohani's death for 36 hours when a brief statement was read on state television. However they did allow the funeral procession, which was charged with emotion, to take place and moreover permitted his brother Ayatollah Sayyid Sadiq, who had been under house arrest for 14 years for being critical of the government, to lead the funeral prayer over his body in Qum before several thousand mourners. At his main mourning ceremony in Qum, a well-known religious orator, Shaykh Manakheh, who was subsequently taken into custody for a fortnight, openly criticised the authorities for their dishonourable treatment of an outstanding *marja*. Rohani was buried in the basement of his house, despite the fact that in his will he directed that he be buried next to his father in the cemetery by the sacred mausoleum of Fatima Masouma.

A. B. D. R. Eagle

Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Rohani, religious scholar and jurist; born Qum, Persia 30 March 1920; married Badro-Sadat Husayn Shahabadi (two sons, two daughters, and one daughter deceased); died Qum 25 July 1997.

BIRTHS

HARRISON: On 21 August, to Jennifer (nee Boyle) and Michael, a daughter, Rachel Emily, a sister for Joanna and Patrick.

DEATHS

HAWESWORTH: Jonathan Miles, died 13 August, aged 25, whilst on holiday in Turkey. He is deeply missed and lovingly remembered by his family - brothers Simon, James and Matthew, parents Diana and Roger and grandmother Joan - and all his friends. The funeral service will be held at St Mary's, Worpleston, Guildford, on 28 August at 11am. Flowers may be sent to J. Miles and Sons, 3 Arbury Terrace, Guildford GU1 4NL.

IN MEMORIAM

PLANTAGENET: Richard, Remembrance before God, Richard III, King of England, and those who fell at Bosworth Field, having kept faith, 22 August 1485. "Loyalties we Lie".

Births, Marriages & Deaths

Richard III Society, 4 Oakley Street, Chelsea, London SW3 5NN.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 11 Canaan Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 4DL. Telephone 0171-293 2012 or fax 0171-293 2010, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements (obituary notices, obituaries, forthcoming marriages, Marriages) must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line (VAT extra). They should be accompanied by a daytime telephone number.

Birthdays

Miss Mary Allen, secretary-general, the Arts Council. 46; Mr Peter Allison, publisher. 73; Sir John Busham, chairman, Zeneca. 57; Miss Honor Blackman, actress. 71; Mr Ray Bradbury, author. 77; Professor Sir Colin Buchanan, town planner. 90; Dr Rob Buckman, broadcaster. 49; M Henri Cartier-Bresson, photographer. 89; Maj-Gen Earl Cathcart. 78; Sir Richard Caring, former Commissioner of Police, Kenya. 85; Professor Sir Cyril Askey Clarke, geologist. 90; Mr Steve Davis, snooker player. 40; Miss Margaret Douglas, supervisor of Parliamentary Broadcasting. 63; Miss Anne Downey, circuit judge. 61; Mr Derek Fatchett MP, Minister of State, Foreign Office. 52; Mr Wilfred Harrison, actor, director and playwright. 72; Mr Max Heledrich, director of the Museum of London. 60; Mr Kelvin Hopkins MP. 50;

Mr Gerald Long, journalist and former chief executive, Reuters. 74; Mr Donald MacLeary, dancer. 60; The Right Rev Robert Marneaux, former Bishop of Blackburn. 84; Sir James Mealer, former principal, Queen Mary College. 76; Mr Alan Michael MP, Minister of State, Home Office. 54; Sir Leo Piatycki, former senior civil servant. 78; General Norman Schwarzkopf, former US military commander. 63; Mr Karlheinz Stockhausen, composer and conductor. 69; Mr David Taylor MP. 51; Sir Anthony Tuke, former chairman, Savoy Hotel. 77; Mr Mats Wilander, tennis player. 33.

Anniversaries

Births: Denis Pupin, physicist and inventor. 1647; Jean-François de Galop de la Perouse, sailor and explorer. 1741; Pope Leo XII. 1768; Thomas Tredgold, engineer and carpenter. 1788; François Forster, en-

gineer. 1790; Dr John Hill Burton, historian and jurist. 1809; William Hayman Cummings, oratorical tenor. 1831; Sir Alexander Campbell Mackenzie, composer. 1847; Gusaf Firding, poet. 1860; Claude-Achille Debussy, composer. 1862; Jacques Lipchitz, painter and sculptor. 1891; Dorothy Parker (Rothschild), humorist and writer. 1893; Leri (Helene Benha Amalie) Reinsch, actress, film producer and photographer. 1912; Deaths: Pope Gregory IX. 1241; King Richard III, killed at Bosworth Field 1485; Jean-Henri Fragonard, painter. 1809; Warren Hastings, first governor-general of India. 1818; Franz Joseph Gall, neurophysiologist and founder of phrenology. 1828; Alexandre-Gabriel Decamps, painter. 1860; George Stille, pioneer of London's first bus service. 1860; Sydney Thompson Dobell, poet. 1874; Henry George Bohn, bookseller and publisher. 1884; Lord John Sanger,

circuit entrepreneur. 1889; Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoigne Cuel, third Marquess of Salisbury, statesman. 1903; Michael Collins, Irish nationalist leader, killed in an ambush 1922; Sir Oliver Joseph Lodge, physicist. 1940; Michael (Mikhail Mikhailovich) Fokine, dancer and choreographer. 1942; Roger Martin du Gard, novelist and playwright. 1958; William Richard Morris, first Viscount Nuffield, motor manufacturer. 1963; Jomo Kenyatta (Kamau), Kenyan leader. 1976; James Thomas Farr, novelist. 1979. On this day the Scots were defeated by the English at the Battle of the Standard (Northallerton). 1138; Richard III was defeated by Henry VII's men at the Battle of Bosworth Field. 1485; Sierra Leone was first settled by the British as a haven for former slaves. 1788; New Mexico was annexed by the US. 1846; the Geneva Conference adopted the ideas put forward by

Jean-Henri Dunant, and the International Red Cross organisation was founded. 1864; the first British aircraft shot down during war crashed near Mons, killing its two-man crew. 1914; the first regular BBC television service began. 1932; Pope Paul VI made the first papal visit to South America when he arrived in Colombia. 1963; an engine on a British Airways Boeing 737 aircraft exploded and burst into flames on take-off, and 55 passengers were killed. 1985; following a change in the licensing laws, public houses in England and Wales were allowed to stay open all day. 1988. Today is the Feast Day of St Andrew of Fiesole, St John Keanble, St Sigfrid of Wearmouth, St Symphorian and St Timothy.

Lectures

Tate Gallery: Richard Thomas, "Picasso: subversive structures". 1pm.

National Gallery: Norman Coody, "Bits and Pieces (iv): Perugino. The Virgin and Child with Angels Michael and Raphael". 1pm.

Synagogue services

Details of synagogue services to be held tomorrow may be obtained by telephoning the following. Sabbath begins in London at 7.59pm. United Synagogues: 0181-343 898. Federation of Synagogues: 0181-262 2263. Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues: 0171-580 1663. Reform Synagogues of Great Britain: 0181-349 4731. Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Congregation: 0171-289 2573. New London Synagogue (Masorti): 0171-580 1626.

Changing of the Guard The King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery sounds the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am.

سكنا من الامم

These starred As are good news for Britain

Britain is a world leader in post-imperial blues. A sense of failure permeates our perception of ourselves. In areas ranging from the economy to sport, millions have long felt that things are not quite as they should be. Other countries have soared onward and upward, while Britain has felt itself left trailing. Even when the news has proved to be somewhat better than conventional pessimism might suggest, we have been reluctant to concede any change for the better. German newspapers regularly carry envious articles about the efficiency of the British economy, but we Brits are still pretty convinced that we have failed.

Thus, on education, there is a widespread disinclination to believe that the news can be anything but bad. So, when the evidence appears to be mostly that things are improving, a hundred arguments come up to show that it cannot be so. Exam results gradually get better, but the obvious explanation – that pupils (and therefore teachers) are performing better – is regarded as probable poppycock. Instead, the immediate assumption is that the exams themselves must have become easier. How can there be so many starred As, sceptical adults wonder?

And yet, a report last year compared exams and marking schemes between the Seventies and the present day, and found little sign of a radical change in standards or performance. If anything,

the suggestion seemed to be that more intelligent analysis is now required of pupils than in the golden olden days. Pure maths seems to be less demanding. Even that, however, is partly because pupils are expected to have a grasp of a greater area than before.

The results in maths and science have continued to improve slightly year after year, after the initial leap forward when GCSEs were introduced in 1988. That first bound was probably misleading. But the subsequent improvements are likely to have been real. There is no evidence from other countries that the generosity of examination markers increases year by year, nor is there any reason why the British should be different in this regard. The comparison between exam results and sports records is not perfect, but neither is it obviously wrong. We have long become accustomed to the fact that performances on the athletics track get better as the years go by, relentlessly pushing previous world records into oblivion. In education, where the flaws are widely acknowledged, we should be pleased but not surprised if things gradually improve.

The reality is that, after long neglect, and recent strenuous efforts to raise sights in schools, pupils and teachers are beginning to respond. It was always going to be a long haul, and the pace needs to be kept up, for the simple reason that we still lag needlessly behind

too many competitor nations in fields such as maths, science and technology. But progress is being made: the pendulum has swung from the regimented education of previous generations (where what mattered was the ability to parrot replies, without necessarily understanding their significance) to the equally damaging discovery methods of more recent years. The pendulum has now swung back to the centre, where both sides acknowledge the weakness of previous extremes: long may it remain suspended there.

The national curriculum, so roundly attacked when it was introduced, has

proved not to be the lethally inflexible structure which its opponents insisted that it would be. Instead, after many largely successful revisions, it now stands for what our fellow-Europeans have long taken for granted: the knowledge that standards can more easily be maintained or improved within a reasonable and clearly defined framework.

Clearly, there is a danger in putting too much emphasis (as school league tables do) on the achievements only of the more academically able. But the experience of other countries suggests that raised expectations in schools can

help to escape the culture still common in Britain, in which children and their parents conspire to despise achievement and aspiration. Lifting standards throughout schools can be beneficial for all, not just for the gifted few.

We should worry a little about the shift in subjects now being studied – a 2 per cent decline, for example, in the numbers taking GCSE English, which marked a greater drop than the absolute drop in the number of 16-year-olds. Increases in pupils studying information technology are welcome, but do we really want more children taking physical education at the expense of English? However, it is by no means clear that the results have been "cheapened"; for many pupils, the broader range of subjects offers greater opportunity to achieve.

That, in fact, is what we should all be after: attempting to find ways of enabling all children to achieve more – not by lowering the height of the hurdles in order to get the weaker ones round the track, but by offering a variety of events in which they can excel. The hurdles that need to be raised continuously are those set for schools and teachers, so that they never start to believe that they can level off.

Right now, in the middle of another August, when some children around the country are scooping a heap of starred As, and others are rejoicing at having simply mustered a few passes,

the proper spirit is one of congratulation, not only to pupils, but also to their teachers, in those schools which have raised their game. And if the increased numbers taking GCSE sciences presages a larger number of pupils setting off next month on science and technology A-levels, so much the better: let's give them all the encouragement we can.

Stop talking, start walking

There you are, enjoying your socially purposeful job working as a redundancy counsellor for an agency that offers redundancy counselling, and guess what? You're made redundant. What do you do? Start talking to yourself? No, there is nothing funny about anyone being made redundant, and it's not to be mocked. But it is curious that this should happen in the week that people say they are starting to grow weary of the whole business of counselling, especially how-to-cope-with-life-trauma counselling. Well, the anti-counselling lobby has a case, in that we have some reason to expect families and friends to help us through rough waters. The problem is, well meaning though they might be, they don't always know what they're talking about.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Brightest and best can be good GPs

Sir: Jeremy Laurance ("Doctor, doctor, you're not on my wavelength", 20 August) suggests that medical schools should lower their admission criteria to let in the sort of people who will not be bored as GPs.

He clearly does not have much idea about what GPs do. We are expected to know almost as much about any topic in medicine as a consultant who specialises in nothing else, and to explain it to the patient so that they understand it. We have to make diagnoses using our own senses and a few simple instruments, without the back-up of huge expensive laboratory and X-ray departments. We don't know whether the next patient through the door will have a cold, a major psychiatric illness or a rare disease we haven't heard of since medical school. We also have to empathise with patients, counsel them and act as their advocate in dealings with the NHS, social services and housing departments.

General practice may be exhausting, frustrating and sometimes deeply satisfying, but it is rarely boring. By all means select surgeons with nimble fingers, psychiatrists who like talking to people and pathologists with no sense of smell, but please let us keep some bright students to turn into skilled, empathic GPs.

JOHN ADAMS
Postgraduate Tutor in
General Practice
Stockport, Greater Manchester

Sir: Jeremy Laurance missed one salient point. People over the age of 30 are discouraged, and even prohibited, from applying to medical school.

I recently applied to medical school at the grand old age of 33 and received one offer of interview (Liverpool University) and no place. This despite the fact that I have a PhD degree, have worked in a hospital pathology laboratory for five years and have undertaken voluntary work. One university told me that applicants over 30 years of age are not accepted.

Whilst I appreciate that training to become a doctor is an expensive business and that younger qualified doctors are able to put in more years of service, I have to ask whether age and experience count for anything in the medical profession.

JOHN HAYS
York

Drivers plead not guilty

Sir: I read with some concern the series of articles based on Christian Wolmar's pamphlet *Unlocking the Gridlock* ("You, your car and how to end the affair", 19 August).

It seems there is now a concerted campaign to force drivers off the roads into poorly funded and inadequate public transport. The freedoms brought by the car are increasingly being ignored and drivers are made to feel guilty each time they start their engines. Mr Wolmar's arguments appear to centre on dire predictions of worsening congestion and environmental damage. These arguments are, I believe, fallacious.

It is highly unlikely that congestion will worsen in line with the direct predictions of the green lobby. Eighty per cent of those



Counselling helps the bereaved

Sir: Your report, "Counselling loses face in NHS review", 18 August) does little to enhance the current discussion about developing standards of good professional practice in counselling and too glibly glosses over the potential value of counselling to clients, particularly in bereavement.

In our experience, clients come to services such as Cruse Bereavement Care because they recognise a need for support in moving themselves through a particularly difficult life event. In counselling, they are offered opportunities for expression of their grief and loss together with a variety of supports to enable them to readjust and build a new way forward. For the majority of the 35,000 clients counselled by Cruse in a year, this is felt to be beneficial.

A research study of a bereavement counselling service conducted by M. Relf (1994) showed that those who received counselling made less use of GPs than a control group who received no such counselling. The savings to the Health Service more than outweighed the cost of providing the bereavement service.

Counselling is offered by Cruse as part of a much broader range of bereavement support services designed to meet the varied needs of clients.

ROSEMARY PEARCE

Director, Cruse

Richmond, Surrey

A long life in Victorian times

Sir: David Miles ("As people live longer let them work longer", 18 August) uses the fact that in 1847 male life expectancy at birth was only 41 years to deduce that "the average boy" would have a working life of 30 years from age 11 to death.

I have no idea what life expectancy was then at age 10, 20 or 30, but high infant and childhood mortality were in a large part responsible for the low average life expectancy at birth.

Life expectancy at birth tells us very little about the typical age of death, especially for those who made it into their teens. David Miles is in danger of perpetuating the myth that in past centuries society was full of ancient 30-year-olds waiting for death.

TERRY MARSHALL

Norwich

Mir: errors at mission control

Sir: The time has come to bring to bear international public opinion on the organisers of the present Mir space mission before it ends in tragedy. A decision needs to be taken at once to bring back the astronauts to Earth, followed by consideration of how best to remove Mir from service.

If anything happens to these men, this will mark the end of international space missions for the foreseeable future, as the present mission organisers will be seen as unreliable collaborators in whom the international community has lost trust.

The human errors in this mission are not in the spacecraft. They are in mission control. They are vanity, complacency and trusting to luck beyond what is practical and sensible.

TERESA RICKARDS

Bury, Lancashire

eligible to drive already have driving licences. A 50 per cent growth in the number of cars on the road is thus impossible.

Furthermore, recent surveys suggest that the number of teleworkers will increase to 3 million by 2000, bringing the volume of road traffic down further.

Cars are getting cleaner. A modern petrol car produces less than 10 per cent of the pollution of its pre-1992 counterpart, and emissions are set to fall by 50 per cent over the next 10 years without the additional legislation already planned. There may be a pollution problem, but much of the blame can be laid on the 10 per cent of road vehicles currently producing 50 per cent of the pollution. One bus, for example, produces more particulates (PM10s) than 128 cars.

To be able to travel at will for work and leisure, rather than when a public transport operator deems one may, is a vital and precious freedom. This is being slowly removed through traffic regulation and now, it seems, through road pricing, closing motorways to cars, car park tax and higher fuel prices. At the same time, little has been done to make public transport more attractive to travellers. Thus far the Government's approach has been all stick and no carrot.

Successive governments have refused to invest in road infrastructure and now berate drivers for having the temerity to cause congestion. Few will use public transport through choice because it does not take them where they need to go, it is expensive, time consuming and highly unreliable.

We need to recognise that owning and driving a car are not tantamount to environmental

desecration, but an essential freedom vital to the economy. However, drivers remain easy targets for political correctness and cynical revenue-raising dressed up in green clothes.

Isn't it time the drivers' view was listened to?

MARK McARTHUR-CHRISTIE
Association of British Drivers
Witley, Oxfordshire

Sir: How many more surveys, studies and "wide-ranging reviews" do we need to tell us the obvious: people like the cocooned environment of their cars and the freedom to go where and when they like.

Public transport will be a viable alternative only where the routes are simple and regularly served and there is no need to carry luggage. Even then the time or cost difference must be considerable to be persuasive. One day's car parking in central London costs about £25 and this is probably the main reason why most (but, significantly, not all) workers take public transport.

Road-pricing or city centre charges will not work unless set at extremely high levels. Improvements in public transport must be equally vast to make any difference. Reducing the price won't work, but, for instance, during the current heat-wave, how many drivers would remain steaming in their cars if all trains, stations and buses were air-conditioned?

PHIL SPARKS

London SW19

Keep young girls out of prison

Sir: The Howard League welcomes the recent High Court ruling that the automatic placement of young female offenders in adult women's jails for assessment and allocation is unlawful (report, 20 August). However, we dispute the assertion, widely reported, that eight out of 14 women's prisons have specialist wings for young offenders.

As part of its inquiry investigating the use of prison custody for girls aged under 18, the Howard League has recently visited nine prisons holding 15-, 16- and 17-year-old girls. We found that these prisons did not have special units for either juveniles or young offenders and did not provide a separate regime or culture as we believe, Parliament intended they should.

Instead we found girls as young as 15 mixing fully with adult prisoners convicted of a range of offences including violent and sexual crimes against minors. The girls were subjected to an environment where women regularly self-mutilated and attempted suicide, where bullying was endemic and where drugs were widely available.

There were few specialist educational and training facilities and often girls had no opportunity to take part in social skills courses such as anger management and drug awareness, and if they did they were invariably mixed in with adults.

Staff were not trained to deal with youngsters who often display complex and difficult behaviour as a result of having experienced a combination of abuse, serious loss and drug and alcohol dependency.

The placement of these already damaged young people in the harsh environment of prison only serves to deepen the problems which lie behind their offending behaviour.

If the Government is really committed to reducing youth crime it must take measures which genuinely tackle offending behaviour and abandon the populist and punitive approach of the last Conservative government.

A first step would be to move beyond the remit of this High Court decision and outlaw the detention of juvenile girls in any prison establishment.

FRAN RUSSELL

Youth Policy Officer

London N19

Polite in Paris, not Pinner

Sir: M D Wells (Letters, 18 August) from Pinner informs us that Parisians are "rude, ignorant, and in a hurry".

This may or may not be the case, but I am sure that they are too polite and too well educated to make cross generalisations about people from Pinner.

WILLIAM FINCH

Redhill, Surrey

Condoms at the chemist's

Sir: The British Medical Association says that consideration should be given to making condoms available free of charge from pharmacies (report, 20 August).

Mates Healthcare certainly supports the availability of free condoms through channels that are specifically resourced to provide the necessary advice about condom use in the context of a full contraceptive choice. Yet Community Clinics, where this expertise and service already exist, are being cut back extensively. Mates believes that the emphasis should be on saving and developing these primary care services, indeed extending them to include general practice.

The commercial environment of the retail pharmacy is, in our view, for practical reasons not appropriate for sexual health (including family planning) consultations. To embark on such a course would require massive and unnecessary investment in terms of consulting rooms and training. These already exist elsewhere in the health service and are themselves starved of cash.

The reduction of unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections is supported by all. The BMA's concerns highlight the need for a new, strategic approach to family planning provision, coupled with the need for comprehensive sex education in our schools. These are the fundamentals that the Government needs to grasp.

CHRIS BELL

Director

Mates Healthcare Ltd

Surbiton, Surrey

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analysis

A happy ending for Ulster

Breathe it softly, but the signs in Northern Ireland are pointing to a way out of the minefield of sectarian hatred and violence. At last, says David McKittrick, a pathway is being cleared that could lead to genuine peace in our time

Much of the Northern Ireland body politic might currently best be described as bemused, as both players and observers struggle to come to terms with the extraordinary events of recent months. They are also grappling with the biggest question of all: can there be peace?

The question is a huge one, dependent on so many permutations, personalities, forces and future events. The path ahead is, almost literally, through a minefield strewn with potential paramilitary and political crises. There will be many fraught moments.

But when all factors have been weighed, and all bets hedged, the answer to the question is: yes, there can be peace in our time. It seems too much to hope that there will be harmony, integration and trust, for many years yet, but there can be peace.

Equally, there are no guarantees, and it is as well to acknowledge the negatives and obstacles in the way. This is, after all, Northern Ireland, which for more than a century has stood as an international metaphor for violence, religious bigotry and political intractability.

The IRA ceasefire came as a surprise to most, and no one can predict with complete confidence that it will last. Even if it does, fringe republican groups such as the INLA and Continuity Army Council wait in the wings, ready to pounce on anything that can be presented as a betrayal of traditional republican ideals.

On the extreme Protestant side, the loyalist ceasefire may have lasted almost three years, but its stated terms are highly conditional, much more so than those of the IRA. It has also proved a highly imperfect ceasefire, since the

major loyalist groups have broken it to carry out several killings. They refrained from publicly admitting responsibility for these, while London, anxious not to have their political representatives from the Stormont talks process, turned a Nelsonian blind eye. In fact, loyalists have been responsible for seven deaths in the last seven months.

The loyalist paramilitary underworld also has its own equivalent of the INLA and CAC, the Loyalist Volunteer Force. This small but dangerous breakaway group, which has already killed two people and has staged prison protests, could provide a focus for disgruntled dissident loyalists who may conclude in the months and years ahead that too many concessions are being made to republicans.

On both sides, in other words, the traditional terrorist groups remain out there, their arms un-decommissioned, and with smaller and more militant rivals hovering in the background.

The sheer longevity of the conflict has produced a society all too familiar with the gun. The number of men who are or have been in prison for murder approaches 1,000, while 10,000 or more have served time for other terrorist-related offences. Thousands more have simply never been caught.

On the legal side of the violence equation, the number of local men who are or have been members of the heavily armed security forces probably exceeds 50,000. Such official resort to the gun may have been necessary, but it is clearly not healthy for a society to have so many imbued with the notion that resolving conflicts is achieved with firearms rather than with politics.

To that feeling can be added all the other negative sentiments stockpiled in this damaged community: bereavement and segregation are responsible for the bitterness, anger and hatred generated by the Troubles which have augmented the existing repositories of historical recrimination.

Given all that, where is the hope for peace? The answer lies essentially in the proposition that the Troubles have provided not just misery, but also an education. The argument is that lessons have been learned the hard way, and that such lessons are often the most valuable of all.

It has been established that both sides have developed self-replicating paramilitary structures, with a flow of recruits ready to replace those imprisoned or killed. Neither the IRA nor the loyalists were actually compelled to go on ceasefire; both could have fought on.

Yet both seem to have been affected by the widespread feeling that, while more years of terrorism were possible, they were unlikely to advance the cause of either. Both sides proved their ability to kill and to suffer losses; yet along the way the feeling took root that neither would achieve eventual victory.

The air became permeated with a sense of mutual uneasiness. And the stalemate and stand-off gradually gave way to an understanding, in many quarters, that if victory was not in prospect then the logic pointed to some sort of negotiated settlement. To this was added a palpable sense of relief that while the war could go on for ever, it might not have to, and that a retreat from terrorism, if it could be effected

without loss of face, was highly desirable.

As with so much else of the political agenda since the late Sixties, the peace process developed from the Irish nationalist side. It was therefore hardly surprising that it was regarded with much suspicion and scepticism by Unionists.

It still is, though it has had a deep effect on the thinking of many Protestants. Those most opposed were senior Unionist politicians, some of whom were clearly more comfortable dealing with the IRA's terrorism than with Sinn Féin's political gambits.

But Unionist political denunciation of the peace process does not tell the whole story of the present Protestant state of mind. Most senior loyalist paramilitants, for example, now approve of that process; this does not mean they are about to buy rounds of drinks for Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, but the years of imprisonment and loss of colleagues have produced an empathy with the republicans. This has translated into a willingness to talk to Sinn Féin.

Most of the Protestant population seem to favour engagement in talks together with Sinn Féin. Although many believe that the republicans should continue to be held at one remove, this is in itself a remarkable state of affairs, since in the last five years no major Unionist political figure has advocated negotiations with Sinn Féin.

Thus Protestants at large have become more flexible than their political leaders, and willing to contemplate steps that are without precedent in their history.

It also seems to show that something of the philosophy behind the peace process, principally that a settlement which excludes a significant section is unlikely to work, is taking root.

The trick in the negotiations ahead may be to amplify this still controversial premise into one of the central foundations of a new political dispensation. Sinn Féin is not about to get a united Ireland; Unionism is not about to get a strengthened union with Britain. The only logical common ground would therefore seem to lie in an equality agenda, in which the rights of all were protected.

But there is a long way to go before it comes to that. The political talks are due to reconvene in Belfast on 15 September. Assuming the IRA ceasefire holds, Sinn Féin will be there, leaving David Trimble to decide whether or not to take the Ulster Unionists into the same conference room as Sinn Féin. The betting is that he will not lead his party into the same room, but the betting is also that he will not walk away from the process.

The immediate outcome could therefore be proximity talks, a form of dialogue at a distance. But the talks will go ahead, in whatever format, Tony Blair having laid down that he wants agreement by May of next year. Few believe that he will get it, but by May it should be apparent whether real engagement is taking place.

If, however, the talks remain bogged down in the all-too-familiar procedural trench warfare, the Government may resort to the option of thrashing out a new agreement with Dublin, to be presented to the parties at a later date. Nobody wants to talk up the idea that the talks are doomed to failure, but it has to be pointed out that so many previous rounds of inter-party talks did not succeed. (The sole exception in 1974, produced an agreement that lasted less than six months.)

But the optimists contend that this time it could be different. For one thing, the strength of Labour's majority and the fact that it is likely to be in power for at least two terms gives Tony Blair an authority that John Major lacked. For another, all the previous negotiations took place in an atmosphere of continuing violence; the expectations of the two communities were low, and those parties, who exhibited intransigence suffered no electoral penalty for doing so.

This time, the theory goes, there could be a new magic ingredient: peace. Assuming that the ceasefires hold, there will be progressively more confidence in them, and steadily increasing hope that they can be maintained. In these circumstances the parties might experience more and more communal compulsion to stay at the table and do real business. The public mood would be against walk-outs and obstructiveness, since these could endanger the peace.

Conflicts of nationality are notoriously difficult to settle, and there is still no precise answer in sight to the question of how to reconcile a tradition which wants to be Irish with another which is determined to stay British. Huge questions remain on how far Unionism and nationalism may be prepared to compromise.

But five years ago few dreamt that it could get as far as this, with ceasefires in place and talks in prospect. There will undoubtedly be much turbulence ahead, but there could also be a powerful new sentiment from the grass-roots. This is a feeling that while their Unionism and their nationalism are important, so, too, is the necessity of halting the type of deal necessary to ensure that the war does not break out all over again.



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Not being in Edinburgh is so hard to capture

I am suffering from slight Edinburgh Festival withdrawal symptoms at the moment. This is a mild ailment caused by withdrawing from the Edinburgh Festival and going somewhere else while it happens. It is triggered by switching on the radio or TV and listening to someone saying what a great time they are having at the Edinburgh Festival. This is especially true of switching on Ned Sherrin's *Loose Ends*, which sounds all the year round as if it is being broadcast direct from a bar in Edinburgh, but sounds even more so at festival time.

Yet why anyone ever broadcasts programmes from the Edinburgh Festival I have no idea. The programme planners must think that because everyone is having such great fun at Edinburgh it is only fair to share it with the rest of the nation, but this idea involves two great errors of judgement. One, it assumes that you can give some idea of the fun going on. Two, it assumes that the rest of the nation gives a toss about the Edinburgh Festival.

In fact it is almost impossible to give any idea of what it is like to be at the Edinburgh Festival, especially if you're having a good time. The Edinburgh experience is something that builds up through days of sleeplessness, acute parking problems, ticket hassles, inspired word-of-mouth hints, unexpectedly wonderful theatre, late night drinking, early morning bangovers, acute ironing problems, hilarious people you've never heard of, dull famous people, great music, snatched sandwiches, health-threatening meat pies ...

This is not something easily captured on TV or radio. And when the media do try to capture this, they either try to plug straight into the excitement, which is a bit like being phoned by someone at a wild party (you can HEAR how exciting it all is down the line without getting any effect from it, except perhaps depression), or they present little bits of acts in front of a captive audience with a chatty presenter, which is like being taken to a restaurant and being given one spoonful of lots of different dishes. It wouldn't work in a restaurant and it doesn't work on TV.



Miles Kingston

The wisest thing to do if you are not at the festival is to ignore the fact that it is going on at all. This is a difficult thing to do, and I must admit that I have given in to temptation. I tuned in to BBC's *Edinburgh Nights* last week in an effort to give myself some instant nostalgia, and through the hi and miss camera work I actually recognised an act which I had previously seen in the flesh. It was Dylan Moran, last year's Perrier award winner, whom I saw in Edinburgh a year ago, on the last day before he won the award.

He was great. On stage last year, that is. He rambled around in a controlled, discursive Irish way from subject to subject, like a pinball machine in slow motion, gradually weaving a hypnotic pattern, sounding a bit drunk but thinking very soberly. Over 60 minutes it built up powerfully and I came away thinking, This man is good - too good to be lumbered with the Perrier award. (I am convinced that getting the Perrier award does no good to anyone. Where has Dylan Moran been in the year of his title-holding? I have not seen his name anywhere.)

On TV, however, he was not great. He just did a few minutes of amiable Irish ramble and could have been anyone. What he does on stage is not designed to be quick-fire or snappy - quite the opposite - so why anyone thought a short extract of him would work on TV I cannot begin to understand.

But then I cannot begin to understand why anyone thinks the Edinburgh Festival is worth bringing to the nation at all. Not only is it an impossible task, but it is a thankless task. The Edinburgh Festival,

especially the Fringe, is a huge private party, and there is no way you can transmit the flavour of a private party. Admittedly it is attended by hundreds of thousands of people, but it is none the less a private party. I have been to many of them as a performer, and enjoyed them all tremendously, but I have never been able to describe adequately to anyone who has never been there what it is like (and do not need to with people who have been there) and I do not believe any TV or radio programme has ever come close either.

I blush to find that I am as guilty as the next man of trying to turn my experience into words, because I find, looking back, that when I am at the festival I do write about it and I do try to convey the flavour of it and I do, doubtless, fail. And this year I am not there, and yet here I am writing about it once more. Worse, I am actually writing a piece about what it's like NOT to be at the festival.

God forgive me, the Edinburgh Festival withdrawal disease is even more pernicious than I thought it was.

Why the still not the Oasis



Suzanne Moore

Rum-ti-tum

سكنا من الامم

Why the party's still not over for the Oasis über-lads

"All my people. Right here. Right now. D'ya know what I mean?" sneers Liam as the pre-planned stage invasion starts. He takes off his shades and does his moody bastard stare into the camera. "Oh my God, he's so old," screams the adolescent girl curled up on the sofa watching *Top of the Pops* with me. "No wonder he has to wear sunglasses. He's got ... lines," my daughter adds. (Actually, Liam only seems to have the one line – the "mad for it" line – but still it's true that, at 24, he's not as young as he used to be.)

Oasis past it? How could I suggest such a thing. Here they are. Now. With their difficult third album, with their girlfriends "tiss out for the lads" tabloid antics and broadsheets such as *The Observer* turning into Oasis fanzines and their free promos on BBC – is there anybody out there who doesn't like them? Jesus probably loves them. Certainly Tony Blair does. The kids in the street like them. As the other Liam, the anti-Liam, Liam Howlett of The Prodigy says, "My Dad likes Oasis." Every body's Dad likes Oasis. This is consensus rock. No dissidents or backlashes will be tolerated. Everyone likes Oasis in the way that everyone likes Tony Blair. It is not so much that these guys are great in themselves, but that they remind us of greatness. Obviously I preferred the hand before they were famous, just as I liked Blair more when he was less certain of power. But then, having grown out of politics, I'm at that awkward age where I still think that music matters.

If it were just music we were talking about then we would have to admit that the first Oasis album was better than the second, the second better than the third. But it would not do to start rumours of national decline just yet, for Oasis, as we know, are bigger than music. They are a phenomenon. This is why excited hawks have been revealing to us for some time now their exclusive sneak previews of *Be Here Now*. The fact is that anyone who has been listening to pop music for the last 30 years has had a sneak preview of *Be Here Now*.

Still, we must take it all seriously for, unlike the nastily commercial Spice Girls, Oasis are a proper rock group. They are blokes for a start: über-lads, certifiable proles who wear their class credentials on their album sleeves. They have nicked and been nicked. They like football and blondes and stardom and their mum. They are sullen louts with genuine working-class aspirations – to crash a car into a swimming pool outside a rock-star mansion. There is no point in saying that it's all been done before. They know that and they "don't give a shit".

Nor is there any in complaining about the dumbing down of rock music, because dumbness can be a virtue. Give me Noel's dumbest, purest lyrics ("I'm feeling personified/Give me gin and tonic") over his mock-meaningful stuff any day ("I've found a key upon the floor/Maybe you and I will not believe the things we find behind the door"). As long as Noel can write a song like "Live Forever" he can be forgiven. What does matter, though, are their aspirations beyond music, which are not so much dumb as completely narrow. Despite their love of The Beatles, there is no comparison. They do not appear interested in ideas, in other words, in



Suzanne Moore

The new album's worse than the second, which was worse than the first, but who cares? All Liam's people know what he means

heart got sick of trying to encapsulate the history of jazz, blues and rock'n'roll into four bars, he bowed out and went back to live in the desert. Oasis simply pare everything down to a vague though emotionally heightened experience.

Their trump card is understanding how it feels to be in a crowd at a football match or at a rave, that feeling of inclusion for those who often feel excluded. They tap straight into a kind of collectivity, a dominant sense of belonging, so that everyone who sings along to an Oasis song feels that they are part of a select but anointed group that somehow stands in opposition to the rest of the world. In reality it doesn't take much to be one of Noel and Liam's "people", as the majority of the population like them, but still we are supposed to feel faintly flattered by this cosmic sentiment.

What Oasis are in opposition to is somewhat vague. It is clearly not the Establishment, or money. As class warriors they are truly Thatcher's children, who think that individual attitude rather than love is all you need. I don't begrudge them their success or their excess. It's just that I cannot equate "cool" with cocktails with the Prime Minister. Don't believe the hype. Oasis are the most astonishingly uncontroversial rock band ever; as everyone agrees, they are "quite good".

The best deconstruction of the brothers Gallagher I ever saw was performed by two little boys with a karaoke machine. Wearing their Dad's sunglasses, these two kids just stood on stage mouthing the words to "Wonderwall". They didn't move, they didn't change their expressions; they just kept their goggles zipped up tight against the outside world, imagining the whole time that they were the real thing. The audience loved them.

The minister returns to a sticky wicket

Fran Abrams talks to Chris Smith

Apparently, Chris Smith is seriously disenchanted. How one is supposed to discern this on meeting him is not immediately clear, as he is charming personified. Barely a crabby word crosses his lips during our interview in his vast office overlooking Trafalgar Square, but still the fact of his crossness hangs in the air like a warning.

Something has gone awry on the news management front and *The Independent*, in particular, has given cause for displeasure. The cause of this friction is the coverage over the past few days of Mr Smith's plans for an academy of sport – excellence. More particularly, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport is stung by the suggestion in our leader column on Wednesday that he has displayed symptoms of on-the-hoof policy formulation, of adopting off-the-cuff solutions that threaten to become problems of their own.

The sequence of events is as follows. Late last week the *Independent on Sunday*, along with other papers, is briefed on the principles which will govern the new academy. It runs a story on its front page saying that team games such as rugby, cricket and football will lose out, as individual and non-commercial sports are to be put at the centre of the project. That morning Mr Smith is interviewed on Radio 4, and says that athletes in the Olympic sports are among those most in need of support.

Lord MacLaurin, chairman of the England and Wales Cricket Board, is interviewed by David Frost on the same day and without having seen full details of the proposals says that if cricket is to lose out, he wants greater freedom to raise money through TV deals. Mr Smith says later that he will be prepared to discuss the matter.

In the meantime, it emerges that in fact the cricket board is already planning its own academy and is not particularly upset by being left off the list for the Government's version. It also emerges that cricket, along with other team sports, will be able to use the centre's facilities for sports science, research, medicine and nutrition.

Following this remarkable Mr Smith was widely accused of vacillation, and of denying cricket, football and rugby access to lottery money while spending millions on volleyball and synchronised swimming. Now he wants to "set the record straight".

"What we were trying to set out was the basic philosophy as to what the academy is there to do," he says. "It is about excellence; it is about turning amateurs into world-class competitors; it is about giving our best athletes the best chance. It isn't



Still smiling: the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport

Glynn Griffiths

'Suggesting that we wanted to exclude cricket from the academy of sport and then that we had done some sort of rapid U-turn is nonsense'

about excluding any sports; it is about doing what's best for each individual sport." Rugby, cricket and football will all receive their own support from the lottery, he adds.

At the heart of the academy, he says, will be the academic and medical facilities which all sports can share. Other countries already have these, while Britain lags behind. Labour said so as long ago as May 1996, when it published its policy on sport.

"Suggesting that we wanted to exclude cricket and then that we had done some sort of rapid U-turn on the subject is actually complete nonsense. We have been saying this all along," he says.

In fact, once Lord MacLaurin had been equipped with the full facts at a meeting with Mr Smith on Monday, peace and harmony broke out. The cricket board chairman had even agreed that he did not want to

remove all Test matches from terrestrial television screens.

Mr Smith is also clearly a little miffed by the intervention of the cricket-loving former prime minister, John Major, who had planned an academy of his own and who stepped in this week to criticise Labour's version. The Tories' own document listed a number of sports to be included but itself missed out rugby league. Mr Smith says, "It was a bit rich" for Mr Major to complain, when his government had put little flesh on the bones and had left him to work out the details.

There have also been complaints – though not in this newspaper – that the whole idea is elitist anyway. Not so, says Mr Smith. Although he does believe that Britain must improve its sporting performance abroad, the £100m which will be spent on the academy is just a fraction of more than

Mr Smith, for the record, supports Arsenal: "I am a keen football fan and a rather poor football player. I kick a ball around a little bit, but I am not up to prime ministerial standard," he says, referring to Mr Blair's apparent penchant for getting his boots out at the first hint of an opportunity.

So, M'lud, are the media guilty as charged? Certainly, there does seem to have been some cack-handedness on the Government's part. For a start, the emphasis has changed since Labour announced its policy last year, despite protestations from Mr Smith that it has not. Then the central academy was to be mainly for medicine and so on, while the training centres were to be scattered around the country. Now many of those facilities are to be at the centre, after all.

And there still is uncertainty about whether the position the Secretary of State took at the weekend is the final one. During our conversation it emerged that he had asked the four Sports Councils for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland for advice on the exact form the academy should take – how many of its facilities should be at the centre and how many in the regions, and which sports it should concentrate on. A final decision would be taken around the end of September, he said, after these deliberations and further conversations with other sporting bodies were complete.

A question still hangs, too, over precisely what the minister was trying to do when he briefed the media over the weekend. He says he wanted to set out the principles behind the new academy, but why now? He could, for example, have waited until the process was complete, by which time the Minister for Sport would have been back from his holidays.

It is, of course, possible that Mr Smith felt the need for some good publicity in the wake of suggestions that his first 100 days had not been an unmitigated success. If so, things could not have gone more horribly wrong. He now says he had all the facts up his sleeve at the weekend, and that he gave some of them to the press but they were not reported. He knew the cricket board wanted its own academy; that there would be more lottery cash for team sports; that the centre's facilities would be largely open to all. Somehow the message did not come across. So, shoot the messenger?

Rum-ti-tum, the heartbeat of a nation

The train jolted its way up the side of the hills into the Peak District. At the heart of the unimposing fell-tops, cupped in a hollow, lies Buxton. It is a small spa town of solidity and decency whose Georgian architecture is on a reassuringly human scale. In the cautious conservatory of its winter gardens, holiday-makers eat Swiss roll and read *The Daily Telegraph*. The shop sells tea towels imprinted with the words of "Bless this House" or "My Kitchen Prayer", which begins: *Bless my little kitchen, Lord I love its every nook*.

If the outside world is knocking at its door, Buxton doesn't need to know. It is safe and old-fashioned and English in the way that Gilbert and Sullivan are. It was just the right venue for the fourth International G&S festival (last year's winners: the South Anglia Savoy Players – South Anglia is Gilbertian for Essex).

It was the big day for the Bournemouth G&S Society. At 9am Paul, a 54-year-old solicitor who had taken the week off work, was already backstage erecting the set and lighting rig for the society's production of *The Yeoman of the Guard*. He has been doing stage lighting for more than 20 years. "You start work before the rest of the company get here, and when they go home you are still here to take it all down," he said. But his enthusiasm seemed undimmed.

By 11am the company had arrived and were sitting in the Victorian splendour of the Matcham theatre, all cream and gold and blue drapes. "Pacing is everything today," Roberta Morrell, their director, announced. "Remember you have to peak at 7.30pm." Roberta, a professional employed by Bournemouth to mark their 50th anniversary production,

had put the cast through a gruelling three weeks of solid rehearsals. "Remember you do this for pleasure; don't lose sight of that fact."

As if. The capacity for innocent enjoyment is integral to G&S. That much was evident from the moment the rehearsal began. It is not just that the splendid rum-ti-tum of Sullivan's music offers endless opportunity for arm-swinging gusto. (Amateurs love G&S, because you're supposed to be happy). Or that the wild historicity of Gilbert's Ruritanian flummery fulfils even the most extravagant childhood dreams for dressing up.

No, in the wings, too, there were endless opportunities for merriment. Yeomen threatened mischief with their halberds. Hats were worn inside out. Heavy Tudor skirts were lifted to wait air to neither regions. By the prompt desk a member of the chorus looked wistfully on to the stage: "I'm understudying Phoebe," she sighed, "but she's never ill – despite the voodoo doll and the pins."

In the stalls, like a beady-eyed eagle, sat Edna, who joined the company in 1949, played contralto leads till 1955, and directed 31 consecutive annual productions until 1986. In her late eighties, she is now an honorary consultant. "Those halberds should all be facing the same way," she said in a whisper which must have reached the gallery. "Most of the men have two left feet – but don't write that down."

By lunch time Janet, who introduced herself as the society's chairman, was ready for a rest. She had only recently recovered from a heart attack. "The support I got after it was incredible," she said. "There's a tremendous sense of caring about one another in a group like this, even

A JOURNEY AROUND THE WHOLE ISLAND OF GREAT BRITAIN



WITH PAUL VALLEY

if you're not bosom pals. Bernard and his wife were fantastic."

Bernard, too, was in the stalls. He had done his bit. He was the props man and he had set everything out in the wings, stage right. At one time his only involvement was to bring his wife, Maureen, who was in the chorus, to rehearsals, since she couldn't drive. Then he got drafted into props and has been, it was universally acknowledged, indispensable ever since. He stood in the darkness and surveyed the dress rehearsal. "It's the best thing that ever happened to me," he said quietly. "No one could be more proud of this lot than me."

In the wings, halberd down, Yeoman Roger filled me in on the role of treasurer. He collected members' subs (£15 a year) and handled ticket sales (£30,000 on a good show such as *The Mikado*, *Pinafore*, *Pirates* or *The Gondoliers*). He has done it for 10 years. It was a bit of a busman's holiday – he is finance director for a Dorset brewery – but he met his wife through it. "Both second marriages," he said as he nipped back on stage.

"Who's looking after the props?" inquired a stranger. "Bernard," I heard myself say. "They're on the other side." It was catching, this sense of participation.

"You can sometimes feel like a hamster on a wheel," said Robin, who played the Sergeant, but was in reality a retired major with the Royal Engineers. It's not just the rehearsals, said his wife, Vicki, who is in the chorus, there are the concerts at the Ringwood Conservative Association, the dinner dance, the quizzes, the Anything-But-G&S night, the barbecues, garden parties and cream teas. Bournemouth G&S, it must be said, is a bit short of the under-45s. "The kids would rather be in *Grease*,

with mikes," said Vicki. "You can't get the young to commit themselves: three months ahead! Every week! The very idea!" It is almost as if G&S speak to a time when the general populace aspired to a middle-class culture: today, in the classless homogeneity of our pop era, everyone seeks safe, non-elitist anonymity. It was a world of activity in which high standards were balanced with giving everyone a role – said the musical director, Jean, a teacher – unlike so many modern pastimes, which involve passively sitting in front of a computer or TV.

The performance was quite magnificent. But the performance was, to me, not the point. In the bar afterwards members of the cast, emboldened ever so politely by alcohol, made clear that they expected *The Independent* to take the mickey out of Gilbert & Sullivan. I would not dream of it. It was Edmund Burke who said that British society is made up of countless little platoons. Bournemouth G&S Society is one of them. They are where our citizens learn the mechanisms of mutuality.

The dogged reliability of the lighting man Paul, the continuity and standards of the octogenarian Edna, the trust and striving after excellence of the director Roberta, the exactness and probity of Roger the treasurer, the love and care which Janet articulated, Jean's acknowledging of the strengths and weaknesses of others – all these are the foundations of our civil society. It does not have to be G&S, of course. It is all there in the bowls teams, the tennis clubs, the night schools, the local Rotary and countless other bodies. Britain would be a poorer place without them.

Tuesday: Knottingley, West Yorkshire.

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COMMENT

Where did all these stories come from that the two sides were close to agreeing the go-ahead on the same terms? The finger must obviously point towards the arbs, who have big money riding on such an outcome.

Distinguishing fact from fiction in BT merger

A ready in a pickle over the BT/MCI merger, the arbitrageurs were put even more heavily in the red yesterday by a statement of clarification from the two sides. Far from being close to resolving their differences and ploughing ahead with the merger on the original terms, it appears the two companies are still poles apart. BT is continuing to push for renegotiation of the terms, to take account of the unexpectedly high costs of MCI's assault on the local telephone market in the US, and MCI is refusing to countenance any such thing.

It was a statement quite at odds with what has generally been appearing in the press over the past week or so. Fearing that the market was being manipulated into believing the wrong thing, that's why BT put it out. So where did all these stories come from that the two sides were close to agreeing the go-ahead on the same terms? The finger must obviously point towards the arbs, who have big money riding on such an outcome.

On the face of it, this was a deal that looked like an arbitrageur's dream. Because there was some possibility that regulators would scupper the deal, MCI stock was trading at a discount to the value of BT's share offer. Buying MCI and shorting BT therefore looked like a sure-fire way to make money. From George Soros to Goldman Sachs and Salomons, every arb worth the name has been plugging the opportunity for all its worth.

Then with MCI's spot of bother in local telecommunications, it all went horribly

wrong. With BT threatening to pull out if the terms were not renegotiated, it suddenly looked as if the deal really wouldn't happen after all. Since then, it has obviously been in the interests of the arbs to talk down this possibility. The more the market believes it will happen, and on the same terms as before, the better the chance of unwinding these positions without serious loss.

If that is what was happening, it has badly backfired. The effect of yesterday's statement was to send MCI stock slumping even further and BT shares soaring, putting the arbs even more seriously into loss. Nobody is going to shed much of a tear for the punishment Mr Soros and others are taking. This is "risk" arbitrage, after all, and big losses come as much with the territory as big profits.

But it does rather point up the difficulty of distinguishing fact from fiction in markets these days. Perhaps it was ever thus. The existence of such big players in the markets, however, does seem to have made it rather worse. The market speculation and press reports that BT pushing ahead on the same terms in return for a rethink of MCI's investment strategy seem to have been just plain wrong. So wrong, in fact, that BT's lawyers had to insist on a statement of clarification being made to the Stock Exchange.

So what is going to happen? The odds on this merger going ahead at all seem to have lengthened quite markedly following yesterday's statement. If BT is still pushing for lower terms, the implication is it no longer

thinks MCI is worth what it was originally offering. MCI plainly thinks otherwise and is sticking to its guns.

It would be a dreadful humiliation for Sir Iain Vallance and Sir Peter Bonfield to pull out altogether, but by the same token they will be punished for overpaying. Since MCI seems to be in no mood for compromises, it is hard to see how this impasse might be resolved. One way or another, both the big proposed transatlantic business alliances – British Airways with American Airlines, and British Telecom with MCI – seem to be running into the sands.

Raising pensions for all is not a sensible idea

Newspapers will always need something to sustain them through the barren summer months: the Whitehall policy option document generally makes a reliable fallback. However absurd or whimsical the idea, a civil servant will at some stage have written a paper on it, thus allowing newspapers to write, with truth, that ministers have considered it. Thus we had the *Guardian* this week splashing on a story that ministers were considering reintroducing the state pension's link with growth in average earnings. This was abolished in 1980 by Margaret Thatcher in favour of a simple link to prices.

Earnings tend to rise faster than price inflation, so it actually makes quite a dif-

ference. The basic state pension would now be 32 per cent higher than it is had the earnings link been maintained.

Since Lady Castle and other Old Labour troopers have been lobbying for restoration of this perk ever since Mrs Thatcher removed it, Harriet Harman was almost bound to consider it as part of her pensions review. This is the sort of thing that sends civil servants wild with frustration, for it amounts to an instruction to cost and draw up proposals for funding something ministers are never likely to do. Or at least if they are going to do it, they will truly have lost their marbles.

This is not just because of its costs, or because it would go against what every other government in Europe is doing. In an effort to get to grips with the rocketing costs of pensions, even Germany is in the process of removing the link with earnings. As it happens, the cost of restoring the link in Britain, although high, is not prohibitive, if only because state pension benefits are so miserly.

According to the Institute for Fiscal Studies, the effect would be to raise the cost of the state pension by 2030 from £42bn annually to £72bn.

Though this sounds a lot, it shouldn't make any difference to the taxpayer; as a proportion of income, the costs of funding the state pension remain broadly the same ignoring demographic factors, since incomes will be rising at the same rate as the pension. As things presently stand the cost of the state

pension as a proportion of income will shrink quite significantly.

So in theory this is by no means an unaffordable thing to do. But is it something anyone would want to do? If the Government is going to raise an extra £30bn a year, does it really want to spend it on the basic state pension?

Obviously not. The spread of wealth and income among pensioners these days broadly mirrors the spread elsewhere in society. There are well-off pensioners, for whom this change would make little difference, badly off pensioners, for whom it would make some difference, and poverty-stricken pensioners, for whom it would make a sizeable difference.

It is impossible to escape the conclusion that the way to tackle the pensions problem is not through pay-as-you-go state arrangements, but through the introduction of some form of compulsion in the savings market. Plainly the benefits of any compulsory funded arrangements are going to take time to feed through to the pensioner's pocket.

In the meantime the Government needs to find ways of targeting state benefit at less well-off pensioners. Raising the basic state pension for all beyond the rate of inflation is not a sensible use of government money. And to tell the truth, the poor civil servant instructed to draw up this particular policy option document will already know that a snowball in Hades would stand a better chance than this of seeing the light of day.

US insurers to sue SmithKline for overcharging

Sameena Ahmad

SmithKline Beecham yesterday denied that it defrauded 37 private US health insurers who plan to sue the drugs giant for up to US\$1.5bn in damages for overcharging them for health tests. However analysts yesterday said they expected SmithKline to settle out of court for a much smaller sum.

The lawsuit against SmithKline's US-based clinical laboratories division comes six months after the company paid \$325m in an out-of-court settlement with the US government insurers Medicare and Medicaid for overcharging. The private insurance companies are suing SmithKline under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organisations Act. Under this act, they are accusing SmithKline of corruption and a deliberate intention to defraud.

A spokesman for SmithKline said: "We rigorously deny that we intended to defraud any insurance company. We think the claims in this suit are grossly exaggerated and the legal bases for recovery are highly questionable."

The insurance companies are riding in on the coat-tails of the US government case which proved that between 1989 and 1995, SmithKline's clinical labs division engaged in questionable practices such as billing for unnecessary and expensive medical tests and altering claim forms. Such accusations have been brought against a number of laboratory companies operating in the US.

However, unlike the government lawsuit, which never alleged corruption or fraud, the current crop of suits are alleging much dirtier practices, including collusion between doctors and the laboratories to maximise insurance claims.

The SmithKline spokesman yesterday admitted there had been problems of overcharging, but never a question of intent to defraud. "A lot of this is about understanding the rules of the US healthcare system. The claim forms were incredibly complex. At that time doctors were asking us to process a lot of tests. We carried them out because the doctors asked us to. That is not fraud."

SmithKline emphasised that

since the Medicare case, its practices had changed: "There is now management in clinical labs, all our practices and claim forms have been improved. We are working closely with people so as not to fall foul again."

Analysts dismissed the issue as a storm in a teacup. Mark Brewer at Hoare Govett said: "It's overblown. The only surprising thing about this is the number of companies suing. SB said last year that it expected more litigation after Medicare." Mr Brewer said the company, which announced a \$400m provision to cover litigation at clinical labs, would settle out of court, probably for \$130m-\$140m, the amount of the provision remaining after the US government settlement plus a future tax rebate.

"These insurance companies will find it very difficult to prove in court both that SB was intent on defrauding them and was a corrupt organisation. SB has made it clear that it has this pool of money that is fair and reasonable. If these companies don't want to take it, they could face protracted litigation and lose everything," said Mr Brewer.

Forget the MBA. All you need is common sense

It has become fashionable of late for business people to quip that the latest management fad is anti-faddism. After years of suffering total quality, customer service, business process re-engineering and the rest, they seem to be relieved by the thought that none of this stuff really works and that they can therefore call off the hunt for the Holy Grail.

But that, of course, is to misread the signals. The point is not that re-engineering or quality is total nonsense; it is just that neither can solve a company's problems in isolation. Just as managers should not adhere rigidly to the texts devoted to each idea, so they should not dismiss them out of hand.

After all, much of the content in these theories is based in solid common sense. Of course a manufacturer should make good-quality goods rather than shoddy ones. Of course businesses need to not just satisfy but delight their customers. Of course they need to constantly re-evaluate how they do things as the prophets of re-engineering insist. Where they typically go wrong is in putting all their energies into, first, one idea and then another and so on.

Smarter companies that are not particularly associated with any one of these ideas do not ignore them altogether, but pick and choose from them what they feel is appropriate. As an executive with one such organisation said recently: "I think we've tried just about everything over the years."

In recent years, various gurus have tried to explain why these businesses seem to have more staying power than those that appear to be forever chasing rainbows. And most have come to the conclusion that it is all

about vision and sense of purpose. But, while this may be true, a new book suggests it may be due to something far less complex: making the right choices. Quinn Spitzer and Ron Evans, authors of *Heads You Win* (to be published by Simon & Schuster at £15.99 on 9 September), reckon that if you strip away all the complications created by management fads and their proponents, business comes down to four critical thinking skills: the ability to solve problems, to make decisions, to anticipate future trends and opportunities and to sort through complexity.

Pointing out that the

problem in the sun visors of its popular Jeep Cherokee model.

Finding that the padded visors had started splitting soon after delivery, the company's product engineers resolved to re-engineer the whole sun visor, until company president Robert Luze intervened. Under his questioning, the engineers realised the defect was a recent problem and perhaps had a simpler solution than an overhaul that would have meant the defect continued while the process was completed. Inquiries of the supplier produced the information that the problem was simply a result of wear on the tool doing the stitching: fix that and you fix the problem.

The authors, consultants with Kepner-Tregoe, a firm specialising in this area, recall how British Airways under Sir Colin Marshall emerged from the financial crisis created by the Gulf War. While many got stuck in a downward spiral of cutting costs to respond to fresh threats, BA forced key executives to examine opportunities at a time of disaster. The result was the spectacular marketing campaign billed as "The World's Biggest Offer" – essentially a seats-give-away that apparently catapulted the company into better financial shape than it had been before the war.

This is a lot more inspiring than ploughing through the pages of data and difficult-to-fathom graphs that characterise many management books. But in the end, the authors risk letting themselves down by falling into the trap that their organisation, too, has names for these basic concepts and if the reader would just sign up he or she could join the pantheon.

Roger Trapp



John McGuckian: Bought 4 million shares for more than £8m Photograph: PACEMAKER

Ulster TV directors buy £9m shares to thwart bid

Cathy Newman

Ulster Television's directors yesterday moved to stave off a possible hostile bid from Scottish Media by spending more than £9m buying just over 8 per cent of the company's shares.

Ulster also announced it was considering returning the majority of its £12m cash pile to investors through a share buy-back. However Scottish Media retaliated by stepping up the pressure on Ulster and increasing its stake in the group to 18.2 per cent from just under 15 per cent.

Ulster held a board meeting on Wednesday, where the directors decided to bring forward the announcement of the company's interim results in the

light of Scottish Media's raid on its shares last week, when it purchased of 13.1 per cent of Ulster. It is thought the directors decided to buy more shares because they feared Scottish would look to increase its stake further.

John McGuckian, Ulster's chairman, was the biggest buyer, purchasing 4 million shares at a cost of more than £8m.

Under Takeover Panel rules, Scottish was prevented from buying further shares for seven days after last week's dawn raid. That time limit expired yesterday, and Scottish took the chance to increase its shareholding. Scottish refused to rule out the possibility of a full bid.

One analyst said: "It's a little bit of macho posturing, but ultimately they could buy back

the whole company. Scottish has certainly had a slap in the face on this one."

There was intense speculation last night about how the directors were financing the purchases. One analyst said the cash repayment arising from a share buy-back could be used to cover interest costs incurred by the directors if they had borrowed money to buy the shares.

However, Desmond Smyth, Ulster's managing director, said there was no link between the buy-back and the directors' share purchases. The directors collectively now own 10.6 per cent of the company.

Ulster announced a 22 per cent decline in pre-tax profits to £3.64m for the half year to June.

ITV asks for more time to discuss licence fees

Cathy Newman

The ITV companies have written to the Independent Television Commission requesting more time to consider the watchdog's proposals about licence renewal, according to industry sources.

Leslie Hill, chairman of the ITV Association, the independent television industry's sov-

ereign body, sent a letter to Sir Robin Biggam, chairman of the ITC, asking for another month to consider the ITC's document on licence renewal.

Privately ITV executives are believed to have criticised the document for its turgid prose, with some saying it offered further evidence of the ITC's failure to move with the times.

The ITC had originally asked

for a response from the industry by the end of September, but the ITV companies are lobbying for a delay as the issues concerned are important and complex. In addition, discussion of the proposals has been hampered by the absence of key ITV and ITC executives on holiday.

The document proposed a change to the way in which licence fees were previously cal-

culated, which had led to wild discrepancies in the amount paid by different companies.

Instead of basing payments on a cash bid figure, the ITC suggested that 75 per cent of future licence fees should be linked to advertising revenue.

As a result, some City analysts calculated that United News & Media, which owns three ITV licences, stood to gain £20m an-

nually from 1999 if it renewed the three ITV licences it owned as early as possible.

City analysts have expressed concern that the ITC said it would take into account programme sales in the UK and overseas when drawing up a value for each licence. Some have argued this would discourage broadcasters from expanding their programming resources.

IN BRIEF

Bundesbank leaves rates unchanged

Germany's powerful Bundesbank held its interest rates unchanged yesterday, but made clear to financial markets it was ready for action and could pull the interest rate trigger at any time. Meeting for the first time after a four-week summer break, the central bank's council kept the discount and Lombard interest rates unchanged at 2.50 percent and 4.50 percent respectively.

But the bank made no comment on the level of its main money market interest rate, the securities repurchase rate or repo, saying merely that it would announce conditions for its next money market operations on Tuesday. Analysts said the bank's message underlined the one sent by the central bank sent to markets four weeks ago – as the mark dropped heavily against a robust dollar – that five years of easier monetary policy could now be drawing to a close.

HSBC pours scorn on Saracen Value

HSBC, Britain's biggest company, poured scorn on Saracen Value Trust, which it is attempting to take over. The banking group dismissed Saracen's performance figures because it had failed to make any adjustment to the value of its holding in computer group Azlan, the shares of which were suspended in June. Saracen has a 3.2 per cent holding in Azlan and is still valuing it at the 555p suspension price. Saracen defended its decision not to write down the Azlan holding, saying it had been taken in consultation with its auditors Arthur Andersen.

ABN Amro first-half profits up

Dutch bank ABN Amro, which owns the London stockbroker Hoare Govett, announced a 20 per cent increase in first-half net profits, although the figure of £2.04bn was at the lower end of analysts' expectations. Profits were held back by operating expenses which soared 50.6 per cent. ABN said features of the interim results were the increase in the strength of the dollar against the guilder, the disposal of the merchant bank MeesPierson, and the acquisition of the Standard Federal Bancorp and the Chicago Corporation of the US.

Inchcape director to leave

Inchcape's director of strategic development, Andrew Cummins, is to leave at the end of the year. Chief executive Philip Cushing said Mr Cummins had played a "significant role in developing and implementing strategy to focus on fewer, larger businesses in the area of international distribution." Mr Cummins, who joined the board in 1992, will not be replaced at board level.

Capital Corp to face industrial tribunal

Des Pereira, the former company secretary and head of finance at Capital Corporation, is taking the casinos group to an industrial tribunal because he believes he was unfairly dismissed. The move follows the issue of a writ against Mr Pereira and two other former employees for allegedly conspiring to "injure the company". The writ claims the three brought the company and its management into disrepute; hampered the company in the presentation of its business and encouraged 11 other employees to wrongfully terminate their contracts in April. The Gaming Board, which regulates the casinos industry, is investigating the company's affairs.

Informative:

With effect from 22 August 1997 the following interest rates will apply:

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Agreed overdraft for balances up to £10,000	9.75%	10.1%	10.00%	10.4%

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Credit Interest	Gross	Gross CAR	Net	Net CAR
	% p.a.	% p.a.	% p.a.	% p.a.
£1 to £2,499	4.25%	4.33%	3.40%	3.45%
£2,500 to £24,999	4.75%	4.85%	3.80%	3.86%
£25,000 and over	5.25%	5.37%	4.20%	4.28%

Direct Interest Savings Account (minimum £1,000)				
Credit Interest	Gross	Gross CAR	Net	Net CAR
	% p.a.	% p.a.	% p.a.	% p.a.
£1 to £999	0.50%	0.50%	0.40%	0.40%
£1,000 to £2,499	4.50%	4.57%	3.80%	3.84%
£2,500 to £24,999	5.25%	5.35%	4.20%	4.26%
£25,000 to £249,999	6.40%	6.55%	5.12%	5.21%
£250,000 and over	6.75%	6.92%	5.40%	5.51%

Gross rates before the deduction of tax applicable to interest on savings. Net: the rate after the deduction of tax applicable to interest on savings, currently 20%.

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business

Halifax in same league as Lloyds

The statistics surrounding the flotation of Halifax make impressive reading. It was the highest expansion of share ownership, 50 million letters were mailed out during the conversion process, and it has the largest single-company PEP with 283,000 customers.

Against that backdrop, a 9 per cent rise in first-half profits to £802m and no interim dividend might be seen as a bit of an anti-climax.

As Jon Foulds, the chairman, points out however, the first half was a truly exceptional period and the headline figures are a bit of an irrelevance. Not only did the period include the conversion and flotation, it also closely followed the acquisition of Clerical & Medical, the first of probably several attempts to diversify away from Halifax's traditional building society borrowing and lending business.

For the record, earnings per share rose 8.2 per cent to 21.2p and total assets increased by 6.8 per cent to £123bn. The shares, which have done precious little since flotation in June, closed 8.5p lower at 727.5p.

The small print makes interesting reading, though, especially the details of Halifax's return on equity. On the face of it, the new bank made 14.6 per cent on its capital in the first half, strip out the £3.5bn of surplus capital looking for a home and the underlying return was a more exciting 27 per cent.

That puts Halifax in the same league as Lloyds TSB, its most obvious rival, but still way shy of the 40 per cent that bank achieved in the first six months of the year. Halifax's aim of becoming Britain's leading provider of personal financial services will hinge on how well it spends its idle capital and whether it can narrow the gap with the industry's benchmark company.

Mike Blackburn, its chief executive, spelled out a 10-year plan to bring its non-mortgage and savings business up to 50 per cent of the total. As it contributes only 25 per cent currently, that will involve some large acquisitions by its life assurance, pensions and general insurance businesses. Unfortunately it's hard to hide a £3.5bn war chest and everyone has seen Halifax coming, driving prices in the sector sky-high.

The other restraint on the share price will be a sense of wait and see about the management ability of its senior executives, which was apparently justified by a spate of lax lending last year in the unsecured loans book.

That said, long-term investors can hardly go wrong with Halifax. It is a leading player, in a fast-growing industry and it has the balance sheet strength to take advantage of the sector's consolidation.

On the basis of forecast pre-tax prof-

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY SAMEENA AHMAD

its of £1.62bn for the full year, the shares currently trade on a prospective price/earnings ratio of 17. One to tuck away and forget.

A profit warning worth re-reading

On the surface, Quarto's profits warning yesterday looks forgivable – yet another sad case of currency-itis. With more than 80 per cent of the book publisher's revenues in non-sterling currencies, the rising US dollar against the German mark and strength of sterling knocked around £400,000 from interim profits and will affect full-year numbers.

And even yesterday's profits crash – £1.6m to £500,000 in the six months to June – was, in itself, less alarming than it appeared. Of the 3 per cent decline in margin, around half was blamed on currency, and the rest to higher sales and marketing costs and unfortunate timing which resulted in fewer new titles in the period. In any case, Quarto makes the bulk of its profits in the last quarter of the year.

But a closer look suggests there are

more fundamental problems. Even excluding yesterday's 28.5p fall to 155p, Quarto's shares have underperformed the market by 58 per cent over the past year.

Quarto makes its money by producing and selling books to publishers, pre-selling at fixed prices. While Quarto makes tiny margins on the first round of publishing – print and production costs wipe out profit – where it has done well is the reprint market – half the group's revenues.

Reprints are cheap to produce and if Quarto can raise the original cover price, it can make a decent margin, typically 30 per cent gross.

The trick, though, is getting new book titles on to the shelves in the first place. In the US, over half of Quarto's total market, that has been the problem. There, the most important outlet for Quarto's books – how to paint, how to cook and gardening glossies – are discount book retailers. Fierce competition in that market has meant an oversupply of titles, with many being returned to publishers.

On the Continent prices of books in depressed economies such as France and Germany have slumped, squeezing Quarto's margins. Add the pressure of currency, which has made books 30

per cent more expensive, and things look tough for Quarto. On top, some of Quarto's big hope titles, like its children's fiction series, have bombed.

Tim Steer at house broker Merrill Lynch has sharply downgraded full-year forecasts from £7.8m to £5.5m. Though the shares are on a forward p/e ratio of 9 times, don't touch.

Maid's grandiose plan may pay off

Since floating his online information company three years ago, Dan Wagner, the colourful chief executive of Maid, has given investors a roller-coaster ride.

Unfortunately, the spills have far outweighed the thrills along the way. Shares in Maid have underperformed the stock market by 36 per cent over the past 12 months. In February, Mr Wagner was forced to issue a retraction statement to try to arrest the decline in the company's share price.

Press speculation forced Maid into releasing a statement of an altogether different sort yesterday – that it is in discussions about a bid for Knight-Ridder Information, an online information provider.

The news is in keeping with Mr Wagner's partiality for the grandiose. Part of the US newspaper publishing giant Knight-Ridder, KR Information is four times the size of Maid in sales terms, reporting revenues of \$285m last year.

So would this be a good deal? Maid could stretch to a price tag of between £250m and £350m, around 1.5 to two times sales. Mr Wagner is keen to reassure shareholders that he will not overpay, but the company will probably have to pay for the deal with a combination of debt and shares.

If it comes off though, the acquisition could improve Maid's prospects. KR Information would give the company access to a large amount of content, which at the moment it has to buy in at a high price. There are also substantial synergies between the two businesses, and acquiring KR Information would give Maid a greater global presence than it has achieved alone.

Though the market was jittery about the size of this potential deal, marking Maid's shares 2p lower to 235p, analysts are already mulling about upgrading profit forecasts.

House broker ABN Amro Hoare Govett puts the company on a p/e multiple of 14.4 times for 1998. That compares with around 26 times for the media sector generally. If this deal comes off and the price is right, investors could see Maid's rating improve. A buy for the brave.

Rescuer bales out after squabbles at consultancy

PEOPLE & BUSINESS



Jon Moynihan: Leaving PA Consulting after a row over how it should be run

Jon Moynihan, the man who has turned PA Consulting around over the past five years, has unexpectedly resigned after a row with the firm's majority owners over how it should be run.

Mr Moynihan, 49, is widely credited with rescuing the 54-year-old consultancy from a slow bureaucratic death by slimming it down and getting it to focus on its strengths. Yesterday the firm said his departure "was precipitated by problems in PA's discussions with the Butten Trust (the firm's majority shareholder) about reforming and modernising PA's governance structure – changes to which he was personally committed, in the long-term interests of PA."

Mr Moynihan, noted for his self-confidence and direct manner, said: "Though I was not planning to leave at this time, I know that the firm is currently very highly rated in the marketplace and that there is a broad base of ability which will ensure continued success for PA."

It is understood that Mr Moynihan was unhappy with the way the Butten Trust, set up by PA's founder Ernest Butten, allowed former members of staff a big say in the running of PA and apportioned them a sizeable slice of its profits.

Mr Moynihan does not have any immediate plans, other than to help PA find a successor. The firm is talking to a head-hunter, and wants to interview external as well as internal candidates.

Just as Andersen Consulting has found itself in the news over its inability to agree on a new senior partner this year, so PA looks in need of good advice on how to manage itself.

Here's another surprise resignation – Andrew Cummins has stepped down as director of strategy at Inchcape, the motor dealing combine, "in order to pursue some more personal business interests".

Mr Cummins has been on the Inchcape board for five years and now wants to take time to think about his future, the company says.

A spokesman emphatically denies that Mr Cummins was asked to go. "We've gone through quite a lot of changes, and we are concentrating on larger businesses. He felt it was time for him to do his own thing." So will Mr Cummins get a pay-off? "None whatsoever. It was his decision to go."

And here's another one! It must be the heat. Jack Rowell's surprise resignation as manager of the England rugby union team this week may have dismayed or delighted rugby fans, according to taste. But it certainly leaves the former chairman of Dalgety time to devote to his business interests.

It is these very interests that Big Jack's opponents in the rugby establishment have attacked him for, accusing him of being a mere part-time manager.

But I suspect the 6 foot six former second row, who coached Bath to an unprecedented nine Pilkington cup titles, will be laughing all the way to the bank. His highest-profile business job was probably at Dalgety, where he was managing director of Golden Wonder crisps. He left three years ago to concentrate more on rugby, ironically enough, and Dalgety then sold the division in a management buyout.

Last year he was made a director of Oliver Ashworth

Group, a distributor of pipelines to industry, while this year he became chairman of Celsis International, a Cambridge-based hi-tech company.

Jack's first real business job was back in 1982 when he headed up Lucas Ingredients, a company which put the bread crumbs on food. There's a pun in there somewhere but I'm far too hot and bothered to make it.

Yes, its another one. David Clement has resigned his non-executive directorship at Thames Water. This was entirely to be expected, however, since the former boss of Dresdner Kleinwort Benson has to concentrate on his new job as deputy governor of the Bank of England.

Thames Water's chairman, Sir Robert Clarke, expressed his "warmest congratulations" yesterday on Mr Clement's appointment to Threadneedle Street, and said he realised the latter would have to leave the board.

And finally, Rugby Group has appointed Philip Bruce as chief executive of Rugby Cement, its UK cement business.

He will succeed David McAteer, who is due to retire in 18 months after a career in cement stretching back to a time when The Beatles were an exciting new pop combo.

John Willcock

UK's Best MMX Buy

Time Computers have reduced the price on the 166 MMX multimedia PC for home and business users. It comes complete with Intel's best selling 166MHz Pentium processor with L2 cache technology, a massive 32Mb of RAM memory and an enormous 3200Mb hard disk. Order early and receive a FREE 33.6 modem and a FREE 2000 word pre-installed software bundle.

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Foreign Exchange Rates

STERLING				DOLLAR				D-MARK
Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	Spot	1 month	3 months	Spot	
US	1.5792	22-20	55-51	100	30-31	59-58	0.7672	
Canada	22.10	71-05	200-21	139-48	100	177-16	1000	
Germany	2.8227	89-07	258-07	19-60	19-19	39-44	33-72	
France	10.351	345-20	1000-00	82-09	161-18	359-64	1000	
Italy	265.09	12-14	15-17	778-2	100	152-51	1000	
Japan	160.45	10-10	30-32	108-92	14-16	46-47	1000	
ECU	1.4689	10-10	30-32	702-21	19-75	325-25	1000	
Belgium	66.045	21-15	59-61	1000	17-17	355-35	328-22	
Denmark	14.15	345-20	1000-00	200-65	43-42	100-12	1000	
Netherlands	10.351	345-20	1000-00	200-65	43-42	100-12	1000	
Norway	10.351	345-20	1000-00	200-65	43-42	100-12	1000	
Sweden	10.351	345-20	1000-00	200-65	43-42	100-12	1000	
Switzerland	2.0291	89-07	258-07	19-60	19-19	39-44	33-72	
Hong Kong	24.251	15-2	15-18	278-5	40-40	125-145	168-97	
Malaysia	4.3325	34-51	63-77	100	30-31	59-58	0.7672	
Singapore	2.0291	89-07	258-07	19-60	19-19	39-44	33-72	
Saudi Arabia	5.8332	37-57	100-00	100	30-31	59-58	0.7672	

[illegible]

Tourist Rates

E Buys	E Buys	E Buys
Australia(Dollars)	France(Francs)	New Zealand(Dollars)
Austria(Schillings)	Germany(Mark)	Norway(Kr.)
Brazil(Renals)	Greece(Drachina)	Portugal(Escudos)
Canada(Dollars)	Hong Kong(Dollars)	Spain(Pesetas)
Cyprus(Pounds)	Ireland(Pounds)	Sweden(Kroner)
Danmark(Krone)	Italy(Lira)	Switzerland(Francs)
Holland(Guilders)	Japan(Yen)	Turkey(Lira)
	Mexico(Pesos)	United States(Dollars)

UK Base	7.00%	Germany Discount	2.50%	US Prime	6.50%	Japan Discount	0.50%
France		Discount London	4.00%	Discount Fed Funds	5.00%	Switzerland Discount	2.50%
Interest Italy	3.00%	Canada Prime	4.75%	Spain	5.50%	Central	3.00%
Discount Netherlands	6.25%	Discount Denmark	2.98%	10-Day Repo Sweden	5.25%	Switzerland Discount	100%
Advances	5.00%	Discount	3.25%	Repo (Net)	4.50%	Lombard	n/a

Bond Yields

Country	5 yr	Yield %	10 yr	yield %	Country	5 yr	Yield %	10 yr	yield %
US	7000	698	7250	732	Netherlands	1890	490	5790	696
UK	6850	671	6800	627	Spain	2900	659	7390	625
Japan	9500	158	9300	222	Italy	6250	80	6790	620
Australia	10000	621	9750	695	Belgium	600	428	6250	570
Germany	6000	485	6000	681	Sweden	1200	561	6570	640
France	4200	422	5590	553	ECU/DM	6000	51	5690	580

Yields calculated on bond basis. ** Denotes new benchmark.

Money Market Rates

	On Night		7 Day		1 Month		3 Months		5 Months		1 Year	
Imbank	6 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4
Storing CDs	-	-	-	-	8 1/4	8 1/4	8 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4
National Authority Certs	-	-	-	-	8 1/4	8 1/4	8 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4
Discount Market Cds	6 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4	8 1/4	8 1/4	8 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4
Treasury Bills (Buy)	-	-	-	-	8 1/4	8 1/4	8 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4
Dollar Cds	-	-	-	-	8 1/4	8 1/4	8 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4

Life Financial Futures						
Contract		Settlement price	High/Low today	Est. Conts. traded	Open Interest	
Long Gilt	(Sep 87)	114.30	115.09 714.29	54,020	16,498	
Germ Govt 100 Bpd	(Sep 87)	102.63	102.79 102.88	10,950	28,948	
Japan Govt 100 Bpd	(Sep 87)	102.06	102.22 102.38	42,000	10,068	
Japan Govt 3 Mth Sterling	(Sep 87)	127.06	127.29 127.38	1,677	n/a	
3 Mth Sterling	(Sep 87)	127.71	127.76 127.81	6,807	17,079	
1 Mth Eurodollar	(Oct 87)	96.45	96.56 96.56	90,000	9,048	
3 Mth Eurodollar	(Oct 87)	96.45	96.56 96.56	90,000	9,048	
1 Mth Eurodollar	(Oct 87)	96.45	96.56 96.56	90,000	9,048	
3 Mth Eurodollar	(Oct 87)	96.45	96.56 96.56	90,000	9,048	
1 Mth ECU	(Sep 87)	96.45	96.56 96.56	90,000	9,048	
3 Mth ECU	(Sep 87)	96.45	96.56 96.56	90,000	9,048	
FTSE 100	(Sep 87)	3,553	3,565 3,565	792	7,783	
FTSE 250	(Sep 87)	470.0	5,069.0 5,069.0	674	913	

Line FTSE 100 Index Option					
Settlement price: 4978	closing offer price				Call/Put
Series	4900	4950	5000	5050	Total/vols
Sep	188/85	135/98	104/107	79/135	--
Oct	218/101	188/23	158/145	130/169	--
Nov	270/132	240/53	211/74	161/97	--
Dec	312/153	281/73	250/165	221/27	110/161

Commodities

INDUSTRIAL METALS - London Metal Exchange					
Month	Cents	3 months	Volume	LME Stocks	chg
Aluminum	1954.50-800	1930-500	63005	45	452
Aluminum +10	1955-500	1930-500	159	444	100
Copper A1	2142.00-50	2120-500	63005	20852	409
Lead	655.00-50	640-50	50-40	19400	52
Nickel	6250-400	6200-400	2020	5000	101
Zinc	5375-52-50	5360-500	4958	1095	133
Zinc +10	5355-400	5340-800	1724	3770	102

Soft Commodities					
Month	Cents	3 months	Volume	Stocks and change in stocks	chg
Wheat	15.00-00	14.75	10475	3770	102
Wheat +10	15.00-00	14.75	10475	3770	102

gem fls /oz	\$	£	Colours	\$	£		\$	£
Ptarmigan	416.00	261.80	Brananite	351	221	Krughrande	329/337	209/212
Palladium	203.00	127.75	Brananite 5 oz	194	122	Sons	75/86	47/54
Silver spot	45/7	2/538	Brananite 25 oz	57	55	Nobles	419/423	289/270
Gold Bufr	323.00	203.59	Brananite 30 oz	36	24	Maple Leaf	327/331	205/221

Source: Spinks & Son

Cocoa		Coffee		Berley		Potatoes		Potatoes	
LUFFE	U/ton	LUFFE	S/tonne	LUFFE	U/tonne	LUFFE	U/tonne	ARA	Q/100kg
Sep	1088	Sep	1916	Sep	7750	Nov	6200	Nov	-
Oct	1095	Oct	1925	Oct	7850	Dec	6200	Dec	-
Mar	1091	Mar	1923	Mar	8240	Mar	6200	Mar	276.5
Jul	5933	Jul	2119	Jul	78	Jul	6200	Jul	227
White Sugar		Freight		Wheat		Corn		C200 Press	
LUFFE	S/tonne	LUFFE	EURO/ton	LUFFE	U/tonne	C50/57		C200/200	
Aug	3510	Aug	1315	Sep	8310	H-L		Sell	
Oct	3520	Oct	1320	Oct	8740	Sep	2740/2820	274.5	
Mar	28490	Mar	185	Mar	874	Oct	2800/2940	276.5	
Jul	1437	Jul	1233	Jul	576	Dec	2800/2940	276.50	

Unit	Material	Quantity	Unit Price	Amount	Unit	Material	Quantity	Unit Price	Amount
100	Concrete	100	100	100	100	Concrete	100	100	100
100	Rebar	100	100	100	100	Rebar	100	100	100
100	Formwork	100	100	100	100	Formwork	100	100	100
100	Admixture	100	100	100	100	Admixture	100	100	100
100	Water	100	100	100	100	Water	100	100	100
100	Electricity	100	100	100	100	Electricity	100	100	100
100	Labor	100	100	100	100	Labor	100	100	100
100	Transportation	100	100	100	100	Transportation	100	100	100
100	Insurance	100	100	100	100	Insurance	100	100	100
100	Profit	100	100	100	100	Profit	100	100	100
100	Tax	100	100	100	100	Tax	100	100	100
100	Contingency	100	100	100	100	Contingency	100	100	100
100	Subtotal	100	100	100	100	Subtotal	100	100	100
100	Total	100	100	100	100	Total	100	100	100

COMMODITY INDICES							
	Base date	+Spot	%Day chg	Dec 31st	%Yr chg	Year ago	% Yr chg
Index	1970=100	182.86	-0.52	212.26	-4.84	200.76	-2.44
Agricultural	1970=100	226.73	-0.89	233.93	-2.87	226.17	-0.25
Mineral	1965=100	717.7	+0.59	85.86	-7.71	71.90	-60.00
Industrial Metals	1970=100	91.57	+0.68	108.79	+1.79	103.31	+1.65
Livestock	1970=100	20.94	+0.05	193.04	-0.02	192.93	-0.05
Precious Metals	1973=100	465.85	-0.45	493.55	-1.01	498.08	-2.84

Source: Comdex, Seattle. A=1962 as a base date for agricultural.

100 Largest Insurance Funds				
Rank		1992	1991	1990
1	Abbey Equity Ser 4	3068	3231	
2	Abbey Bond	1962	2042	
3	Abbey Managed Equity	1943	2042	
4	Abbey Bond	1943	2042	
5	Abbey Managed Equity	1943	2042	
6	Abbey Managed Equity	1943	2042	
7	Abbey Managed Equity	1943	2042	
8	Abbey Managed Equity	1943	2042	
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98	Abbey Managed Equity	1943	2042	
99	Abbey Managed Equity	1943	2042	
100	Abbey Managed Equity	1943	2042	

[illegible][illegible]

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YORK EBOR MEETING: A hair-raising ride in the Nunthorpe Stakes but might and mane help Darley to shares the spoils

Greaves in a feminine conquest

RICHARD EDMONDSON

Martians did not land in the middle of yesterday's big race here and Shergar was not in the field but otherwise everything else incredible happened in the Nunthorpe Stakes.

Just under 60 seconds of high Knivesmire theatre culminated in a dead-heat between Coastal Bluff, who ran almost the entire journey without the navigational aid of a bit in his mouth, and Ya Malak, whose jockey, Alex Greaves, became the first woman in Europe to capture a Group One race.

They don't give out any easily in Yorkshire and following Les Eyr's victory in the Ebor on Wednesday this was a triumph for two yards separated by 10 miles in the James Herriot landscape of Thirsk.

The two camps are hardly on sugar-borrowing terms, however. Greaves made her name at Mainby House, the premises of Coastal Bluff's trainer, David Barron, and also the yard where her mother Val is the assistant trainer. The high point of the relationship was Amcable's 1991 Lincoln win, the low the day she took David Nicholls, Ya Malak's trainer, home for tea. Suddenly amicable did not seem the appropriate word. Greaves did not seem to think there would be a joint party last night.

This was the most populated Nunthorpe for 30 years with 15 runners and the realisation that it would also be outstandingly dramatic came moments after the stalls crashed open.

The grey monolith that is

Coastal Bluff unwound his long limbs unusually swiftly but as Kevin Darley made his first manual adjustments a ring in the gelding's bit snapped, leaving the metal of his bridle swinging uselessly under the muzzle. Darley was left as out of control as Eddie Irvine without a steering wheel (or Eddie with a steering wheel for that matter). "The horse jumped very well but I was frightened that he was that little bit keen early on," the jockey reported. "When I took hold of him to take him back, something just went. I heard something go ping."

"Horses came either side and that helped me with the steering and while he was bang in there with a chance I wasn't going to give up on him. Thankfully he's got a long mane so I used that as best I could to keep my balance."

"It was a bit scary but out there the adrenalin is flowing and my first thoughts were that he was still in the race and I wanted to get the job done. I didn't get scared until afterwards."

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: 10/11
NB: Boffin Joanne (Newmarket 3.35)

While Darley was performing his delicate gymnastics at 40mph, Greaves and Ya Malak crept ever closer. At the line York's photographic equipment was incapable of separating them, though Darley did separate himself from Coastal Bluff when it was expedient to do so.



The official photo-finish picture shows Coastal Bluff (far side) and Ya Malak sharing the spoils in yesterday's Nunthorpe Stakes. Averti is third and Cyranos Lad fourth

It made Frankie Dettori's static dismount look rather tame.

Ya Malak too had overcome the fetes to claim his prize. The gelding was so sick with colic after his last run at Goodwood that his racing career, not to mention his life itself, was under threat. Now his name will go down in history as the transporter for his mould-breaking 29-year-old rider. "Today I think I've shown that if the animal is good enough then so am I," Greaves said.

Hubby made his name as the partner of Soba and has exhibited in a short career that he is also a devil of a competitor as a trainer. David Nicholls is bald and craggy and hewn from the same seam as another dis-

tinctive Yorkshireman Brian Glover. He will tell you that during his time in the saddle he had no truck with women jockeys. Nicholls, though, is no longer a riding chauvinist, presumably because if he was he would no longer get his meals cooked or dirty washing cleaned.

"Ya Malak showed what a good horse he is today and the jockey did the same," he said. "I don't have to tell anyone how good she is any more. Everyone in England, Ireland and France can see how capable she is."

"She's philosophical and realises there are owners and trainers who will never put her up, but that's their problem. I'm just glad she rides my horses because she rides them very well."

It was a hair-raising ride in the Nunthorpe Stakes but might and mane help Darley to shares the spoils

No feigning the tension after Bluff's late run

Greg Wood witnesses the long wait endured in York's winners' enclosure

It took less than a minute for the 15 runners to pound down the five furlongs of the Knivesmire, but almost half an hour before the destination of nearly £100,000 prize money could be determined. Jane Stickle, the judge, took 24 minutes to decide that Ya Malak and Coastal Bluff were beyond separation, and with each passing second, the knots in the stomachs of the two horses' connections grew ever tighter.

"At least it's stayed in Yorkshire," someone said, and that was the only certainty on offer. Immediately after the race, Ya Malak was most people's idea of the winner, but the replay showed just how close it was and suddenly no one was counting their winnings. Certainly not Mike Gosse, the owner of Ya Malak, who stood in the rain in the winners' enclosure holding his umbrella with a commendably tremor-free hand.

Stickle called for a blown-up print, and then another. Not

so long ago, a dead-heat would have been declared after the first print, but not any more. Judges, with the latest in modern technology to assist them, are determined to find a winner wherever possible, even when everyone could see that a dead-heat was the fairest result of all.

By the time Stickle settled down to examine the second print, she was operating at almost a molecular level. Yet still the minutes dragged past, as both punters and owners tried to calculate what was riding on the outcome.

"I'd happily split it with them now," Gosse said, five minutes before the result finally arrived. "It's the best result. What's the point in blowing it up and the blowing it up again?" It was the attitude of a true sportsman, but even then, few believed that Stickle would declare a dead-heat, the first in a Group One event since Prince Of Denmark and Scenic crossed the line as one in the Dewhurst Stakes nine years ago.

Even the diligent judge, however, finally had to admit defeat, as the field for the next race was cantering to the post. Where there would otherwise have been both jubilation and bitter disappointment, now there was simply jubilation.

Some might say that it was an unsatisfactory result, that such an important race should always have just one winner. But not if they have experienced the carcering emotions in the winners' enclosure yesterday, or the unbridled delight that the final outcome was an honourable draw.

GOODWOOD

2.40: Here Trigger, the mount of Pat Eddery, is likely to attract attention but it is worrying that this one's trainer has not had a winner for almost a year. In contrast, the stable of MR BROWNING is in top form. This front-runner is admittedly inconsistent but is a course and distance winner in August 1995 and is now on a lower handicap mark.

3.10: ELISHAMMS made a favourable impression when quickening clear to beat Rahab by 3 lengths at Newmarket. It will be no easy task, though, to overcome the Henry Cecil-trained Midnight Line, who won here three weeks ago, and the Thirsk winner Half-Hitch, who represents the David Loder yard and is going to have improved for that initial outing.

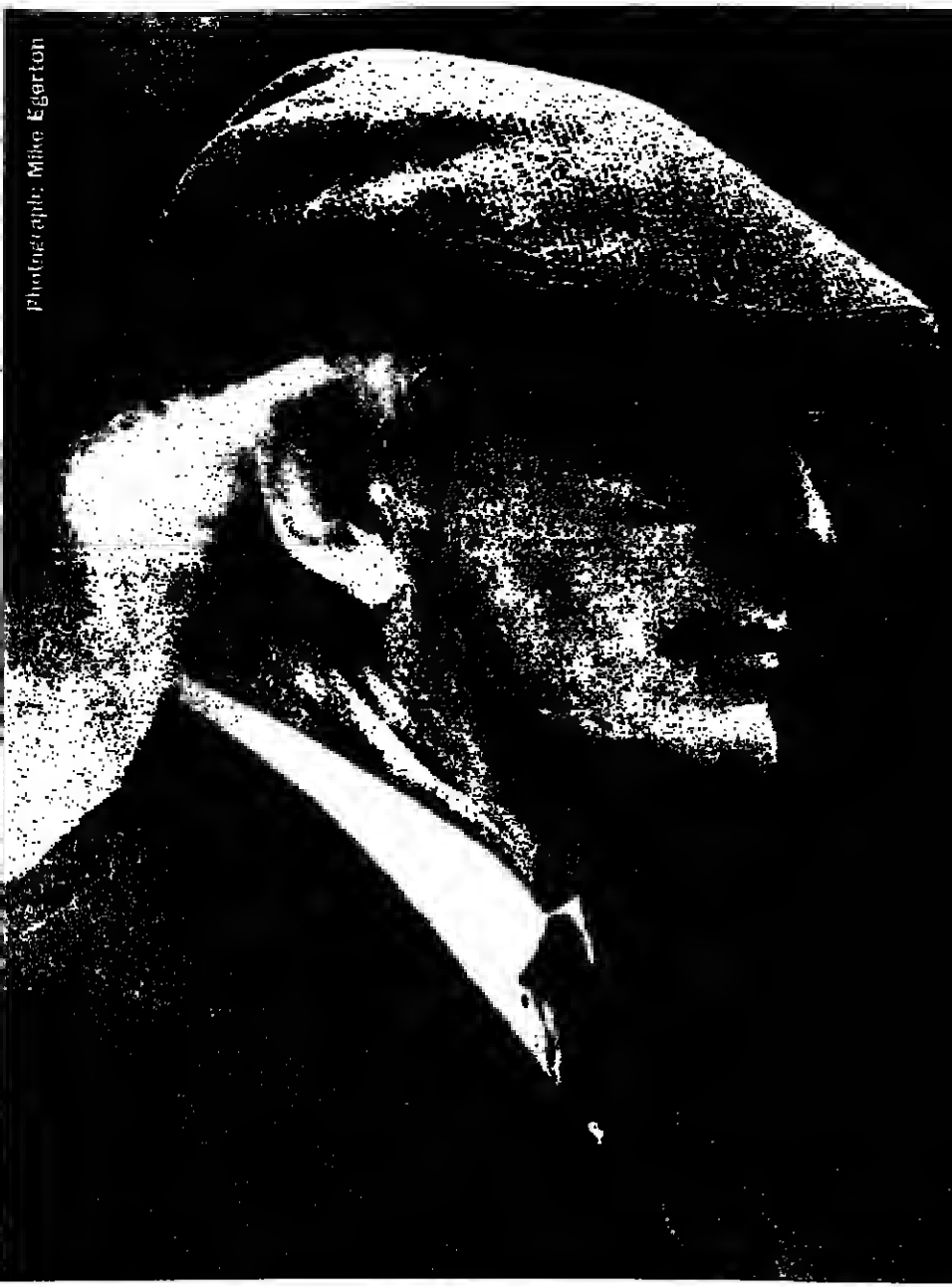
HYPERION'S TV TIPS

3.40: Kafaf was unchallenged at Thirsk (time and seems certain to be well supported in the market this afternoon. Dandel is no great shakes but hails from a yard that excels at picking up prizes such as this. SPACE RACE was only sixth at Sandown eight days ago but was not disgraced over that inadequate seven furlongs. The Charlie Cyster-trained gelding has already proved he stays today's trip of nine furlongs and an improved display can be expected.

FORM GUIDE

ELISHAMMS, by Zafonic out of the useful Ghazal, got her career off to a sparkling start when taking a Newmarket maiden (12) by three lengths from Rahab three weeks ago. She could have stretched the advantage had Richard Hills pressed at the button and the win was fully expected with Elshamms going off at 6-5 in a field of 15. It will take a good one to beat her, but Half-Hitch is sure to make her fight, having won a Thirsk maiden (10) in good style last week. She is by Denis out of Cheviot Park and Sassa Harone, making up the 10-11-12-13-14-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-32-33-34-35-36-37-38-39-40-41-42-43-44-45-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-53-54-55-56-57-58-59-60-61-62-63-64-65-66-67-68-69-70-71-72-73-74-75-76-77-78-79-80-81-82-83-84-85-86-87-88-89-90-91-92-93-94-95-96-97-98-99-100-101-102-103-104-105-106-107-108-109-110-111-112-113-114-115-116-117-118-119-120-121-122-123-124-125-126-127-128-129-130-131-132-133-134-135-136-137-138-139-140-141-142-143-144-145-146-147-148-149-150-151-152-153-154-155-156-157-158-159-160-161-162-163-164-165-166-167-168-169-170-171-172-173-174-175-176-177-178-179-180-181-182-183-184-185-186-187-188-189-190-191-192-193-194-195-196-197-198-199-200-201-202-203-204-205-206-207-208-209-210-211-212-213-214-215-216-217-218-219-220-221-222-223-224-225-226-227-228-229-230-231-232-233-234-235-236-237-238-239-240-241-242-243-244-245-246-247-248-249-250-251-252-253-254-255-256-257-258-259-260-261-262-263-264-265-266-267-268-269-270-271-272-273-274-275-276-277-278-279-280-281-282-283-284-285-286-287-288-289-290-291-292-293-294-295-296-297-298-299-300-301-302-303-304-305-306-307-308-309-310-311-312-313-314-315-316-317-318-319-320-321-322-323-324-325-326-327-328-329-330-331-332-333-334-335-336-337-338-339-340-341-342-343-344-345-346-347-348-349-350-351-352-353-354-355-356-357-358-359-360-361-362-363-364-365-366-367-368-369-370-371-372-373-374-375-376-377-378-379-380-381-382-383-384-385-386-387-388-389-390-391-392-393-394-395-396-397-398-399-400-401-402-403-404-405-406-407-408-409-410-411-412-413-414-415-416-417-418-419-420-421-422-423-424-425-426-427-428-429-430-431-432-433-434-435-436-437-438-439-440-441-442-443-444-445-446-447-448-449-450-451-452-453-454-455-456-457-458-459-460-461-462-463-464-465-466-467-468-469-470-471-472-473-474-475-476-477-478-479-480-481-482-483-484-485-486-487-488-489-490-491-492-493-494-495-496-497-498-499-500-501-502-503-504-505-506-507-508-509-510-511-512-513-514-515-516-517-518-519-520-521-522-523-524-525-526-527-528-529-530-531-532-533-534-535-536-537-538-539-540-541-542-543-544-545-546-547-548-549-550-551-552-553-554-555-556-557-558-559-560-561-562-563-564-565-566-567-568-569-570-571-572-573-574-575-576-577-578-579-580-581-582-583-584-585-586-587-588-589-590-591-592-593-594-595-596-597-598-599-600-601-602-603-604-605-606-607-608-609-610-611-612-613-614-615-616-617-618-619-620-621-622-623-624-625-626-627-628-629-630-631-632-633-634-635-636-637-638-639-640-641-642-643-644-645-646-647-648-649-650-651-652-653-654-655-656-657-658-659-660-661-662-663-664-665-666-667-668-669-670-671-672-673-674-675-676-677-678-679-680-681-682-683-684-685-686-687-688-689-690-691-692-693-694-695-696-697-698-699-700-701-702-703-704-705-706-707-708-709-710-711-712-713-714-715-716-717-718-719-720-721-722-723-724-725-726-727-728-729-730-731-732-733-734-735-736-737-738-739-740-741-742-743-744-745-746-747-748-749-750-751-752-753-754-755-756-757-758-759-760-761-762-763-764-765-766-767-768-769-770-771-772-773-774-775-776-777-778-779-780-781-782-783-784-785-786-787-788-789-790-791-792-793-794-795-796-797-798-799-800-801-802-803-804-805-806-807-808-809-810-811-812-813-814-815-816-817-818-819-820-821-822-823-824-825-826-827-828-829-830-831-832-833-834-835-836-837-838-839-840-841-842-843-844-845-846-847-848-849-850-851-852-853-854-855-856-857-858-859-860-861-862-863-864-865-866-867-868-869-870-871-872-873-874-875-876-877-878-879-880-881-882-883-884-885-886-887-888-889-890-891-892-893-894-895-896-897-898-899-900-901-902-903-904-905-906-907-908-909-910-911-912-913-914-915-916-917-918-919-920-921-922-923-924-925-926-927-928-929-930-931-932-933-934-935-936-937-938-939-940-941-942-943-944-945-946-947-948-949-950-951-952-953-954-955-956-957-958-959-960-961-962-963-964-965-966-967-968-969-970-971-972-973-974-975-976-977-978-979-980-981-982-983-984-985-986-987-988-989-990-991-992-993-994-995-996-997-998-999-1000-1001-1002-1003-1004-1005-1006-1007-1008-1009-1010-1011-1012-1013-1014-1015-1016-1017-1018-1019-1020-1021-1022-1023-1024-1025-1026-1027-1028-1029-1030-1031-1032-1033-1034-1035-1036-1037-1038-1039-1040-1041-1042-1043-1044-1045-1046-1047-1048-1049-1050-1051-1052-1053-1054-1055-1056-1057-1058-1059-1060-1061-1062-1063-1064-1065-1066-1067-1068-1069-1070-1071-1072-1073-1074-1075-1076-1077-1078-1079-1080-1081-1082-1083-1084-1085-1086-1087-1088-1089-1090-1091-1092-1093-1094-1095-1096-1097-1098-1099-1100-1101-1102-1103-1104-1105-1106-1107-1108-1109-1110-1111-1112-1113-1114-1115-1116-1117-1118-1119-1120-1121-1122-1123-1124-1125-1126-1127-1128-1129-1130-1131-1132-1133-1134-1135-1136-1137-1138-1139-1140-1141-1142-1143-1144-1145-1146-1147-1148-1149-1150-1151-1152-1153-1154-1155-1156-1157-1158-1159-1160-1161-1162-1163-1164-1165-1166-1167-1168-1169-1170-1171-1172-1173-1174-1175-1176-1177-1178-1179-1180-1181-1182-1183-1184-1185-1186-1187-1188-1189-1190-1191-1192-1193-1194-1195-1196-1197-1198-1199-1200-1201-1202-1203-1204-1205-1206-1207-1208-1209-1210-1211-1212-1213-1214-1215-1216-1217-1218-1219-1220-1221-1222-1223-1224-1225-1226-1227-1228-1229-1230-1231-1232-1233-1234-1235-1236-1237-1238-1239-1240-1241-1242-1243-1244-1245-1246-1247-1248-1249-1250-1251-1252-1253-1254-1255-1256-1257-1258-1259-1260-1261-1262-1263-1264-1265-1266-1267-1268-1269-1270-1271-1272-1273-1274-1275-1276-1277-1278-1279-1280-1281-1282-1283-1284-1285-1286-1287-1288-1289-1290-1291-1292-1293-1294-1295-1296-1297-1298-1299-1300-1301-1302-1303-1304-1305-1306-1307-1308-1309-1310-1311-1312-1313-1314-1315-1316-1317-1318-1319-1320-1321-1322-1323-1324-1325-1326-1327-1328-1329-1330-1331-1332-1333-1334-1335-1336-1337-1338-1339-1340-1341-1342-1343-1344-1345-1346-1347-1348-1349-1350-1351-1352-1353-1354-1355-1356-1357-1358-1359-1360-1361-1362-1363-1364-1365-1366-1367-1368-1369-1370-1371-1372-1373-1374-1375-1376-1377-1378-1379-1380-1381-1382-1383-1384-1385-1386-1387-1388-1389-1390-1391-1392-1393-1394-1395-1396-1397-1398-1399-1400-1401-1402-1403-1404-1405-1406-1407-1408-1409-1410-1411-1412-1413-1414-1415-1416-1417-1418-1419-1420-1421-1422-1423-1424-1425-1426-1427-1428-1429-1430-1431-1432-1433-1434-1435-1436-1437-1438-1439-1440-1441-1442-1443-1444-1445-1446-1447-1448-1449-1450-1451-1452-1453-1454-1455-1456-1457-1458-1459-1460-1461-1462-1463-1464-1465-1466-1467-1468-1469-1470-1471-1472-1473-1474-1475-1476-1477-1478-1479-1480-1481-1482-1483-1484-1485-1486-1487-1488-1489-1490-1491-1492-1493-1494-1495-1496-1497-1498-1499-1500-1501-1502-1503-1504-1505-1506-1507-1508-1509-1510-1511-1512-1513-1514-1515-1516-1517-1518-1519-1520-1521-1522-1523-1524-1525-1526-1527-1528-1529-1530-1531-1532-1533-1534-1535-1536-1537-1538-1539-1540-1541-1542-1543-1544-1545-1546-1547-1548-1549-1550-1551-1552-1553-1554-1555-1556-1557-1558-1559-1560-1561-1562-1563-1564-1565-1566-1567-1568-1569-1570-1571-1572-1573-1574-1575-1576-1577-1578-1579-1580-1581-1582-1583-1584-1585-1586-1587-1588-1589-1590-1591-1592-1593-1594-1595-1596-1597-1598-1599-1600-1601-1602-1603-1604-1605-1606-1607-1608-1609-1610-1611-1612-1613-1614-1615-1616-1617-1618-1619-1620-1621-1622-1623-1624-1625-1626-1627-1628-1629-1630-1631-1632-1633-1634-1635-1636-1637-1638-1639-1640-1641-1642-1643-1644-1645-1646-1647-1648-1649-1650-1651-1652-1653-1654-1655-1656-1657-1658-1659-1660-1661-1662-1663-1664-1665-1666-1667-1668-1669-1670-1671-1672-1673-1674-1675-1676-1677-1678-1679-1680-1681-1682-1683-1684-1685-1686-1687-1688-1689-1690-1691-1692-1693-1694-1695-1696-1697-1698-1699-1700-1701-1702-1703-1704-1705-1706-1707-1708-1709-1710-1711-1712-1713-1714-1715-1716-1717-1718-1719-1720-1721-1722-1723-1724-1725-1726-1727-1728-1729-1730-1731-1732-1733-1734-1735-1736-1737-1738-1739-1740-1741-1742-1743-1744-1745-1746-1747-1748-1749-1750-1751-1752-1753-1754-1755-1756-1757-1758-1759-1760-1761-1762-1763-1764-1765-1766-1767-1768-1769-1770-1771-1772-1773-1774-1775-1776-1777-1778-1779-1780-1781-1782-1783-1784-1785-1786-1787-1788-1789-1790-1791-1792-1793-1794-1795-1796-1797-1798-1799-1800-1801-1802-1803-1804-1805-1806-1807-1808-1809-1810-1811-1812-1813-1814-1815-1816-1817-1818-1819-1820-1821-1822-1823-1824-1825-1826-1827-1828-1829-1830-1831-1832-1833-1834-1835-1836-1837-1838-1839-1840-1841-1842-1843-1844-1845-1846-1847-1848-1849-1850-1851-1852-1853-1854-1855-1856-1857-1858-1859-1860-1861-1862-1863-1864-1865-1866-1867-1868-1869-1870-1871-1872-1873-1874-1875-1876-1877-1878-1879-1880-1881-1882-1883-1884-1885-1886-1887-1888-1889-1890-1891-1892-1893-1894-1895-1896-1897-1898-1899-1900-1901-1902-1903-1904-1905-1906-1907-1908-1909-1910-1911-1912-1913-1914-1915-1916-1917-1918-1919-1920-1921-1922-1923-1924-1925-1926-1927-1928-1929-1930-1931-1932-1933-1934-1935-1936-1937-1938-1939-1940-1941-1942-1943-1944-1945-1946-1947-1948-1949-1950-1951-1952-1953-1954-1955-1956-1957-1958-1959-1960-1961-1962-1963-1964-1965-1966-1967-1968-1969-1970-1971-1972-1973-1974-1975-1976-1977-1978-1979-1980-19

sport



Class act undone by parlour politics

Chris Hewett assesses the legacy of Jack Rowell, the coach who won the battle to restore England's rugby pride but lost the power game at Twickenham

Say what you like about Jack Rowell – and the most outspoken of his recent critics, Fran Cotton, did precisely that at the weekend in a now notorious public outburst – but as all successful businessmen know, the bottom line is the only thing that really counts. Rowell stayed well above that line in his three and a half years as England coach and his successor, whoever he may be, does half as well between now and the turn of the century, it will be some achievement.

It is a measure of Rowell's stature as a rugby figure that the Rugby Football Union are now likely to employ two men to fill a role he happily performed on his own – "I've Margaret Thatcher hours," he once said, referring to his contemptuous disdain for regular sleeping habits – and a quick glance at a hulking credit column tells its own story. Thirteen league and cup trophies with Bath in a golden decade from 1984, supplemented by a Grand Slam, three Triple Crowns, a World Cup semi-final and 21 Test victories from 29 starts with England.

Why, then, the dissatisfaction that underlainly circulated around the highest echelons of the English game as Rowell cautiously but sensibly rebuilt his national team from the wreckage inflicted by Jonah Lomu on that crucifying afternoon in Cape Town in June 1995?

Why should the Cottons, Dick Bests, Geoff Cookes and Don Rutherford of this world have felt the need to undermine the efforts of a man whose commitment to his country's rugby fortunes could never have been questioned, not even by his most implacable enemy? After all, Rowell was and remains every bit as fanatically English as the most decorated of Twickenham's wing-commander population.

As is so often the case, strong personalities lay at the root of the problem. Rowell could be prickly, confrontational, challenging and waspish. He did not suffer fools gladly – indeed, he did not suffer them at all – and while he found it easy to do, things his way in the small town environment of Bath, the parlour-game politics habitually played out at Twickenham were always likely to frustrate him. And frustrated he was; as recently as Monday afternoon he was professing genuine dis-

belief in the situation in which he found himself. Not exactly one of life's natural diplomats, he quickly learned to curb his instincts and say the right thing in the right place. But, occasionally, he would drop his guard. During last season's Five Nations Championship he let rip in a newspaper interview, damning the RFU persecutors in no uncertain terms. A year previously, he had turned the scatter-gun on the press, accusing his jour-

Besieged Bears ready to fight until they drop

Dave Hadfield looks at the desperate plight of Oldham's rugby league team

Oldham have every reason to fight for their lives in their last three Super League matches. Their life as a club, or at least as a club with any top-flight pretensions, could depend on those 240 minutes of rugby.

At the very least, Oldham need to win one and draw one of those remaining fixtures, starting with the home match against Wigan on Friday and followed by a trip to Paris and a visit from Warrington. Only the most blinkered Bear would put any money on them to get away with it.

"The club is under a fair amount of pressure," admits its chairman and chief executive, Jim Quinn. "This has been quite a traumatic season for us; a season where nothing has gone right."

For many, the trauma began when Oldham played their last match at Watersheddings, the dilapidated and weather-lashed old ground on the edge of the moors. It would have won few awards for its facilities, but the theory that it was worth a few points start against some less committed visitors seems to have been borne out.

In the much more neutral surroundings of Oldham Athletic's Boundary Park, they have been a far less intimidating proposition – and it shows in their results. Then there was the business of Andy Goodway, a coach still highly regarded by many players and supporters, who was sacked after becoming increasingly outspoken about the shortcomings of his board and Quinn in particular.

"I think there's a mixture of views about Andy," says Quinn now. "But at the time we made the decision we were in pretty dire straits. Andy was speaking out all right, but I think it was because he was struggling with de-

feat. He also struggled with the changes that had to be taken on board – but staying at Watersheddings wasn't an option."

A messy transfer of coaching responsibilities to Bob Lindner did not help, but nor has continuing uncertainty over the club's home. It has been clear from the start that their football neighbours did not particularly want them as tenants, but the proposed new stadium that would take them out of Boundary Park is, as Quinn admits, no closer than it was two years ago.

If Oldham do go down, there is, he also admits, no way that they can afford to play there on First Division grounds. That leaves the possible option of moving in with Oldham Rugby Union club, if its modest facilities could be brought up to standard.

Gloomier prophecies – and there is no shortage of them in Oldham – predict that there could be no ground and no club. Quinn rejects that prediction. "I still believe that there is going to be a will and a way found to sustain one of the game's original clubs," he says, but even he admits that it will be fiendishly difficult to regroup and get back into Super League.

Of course, there is a strong feeling within the town that Super League would not be unhappy at that result. As a small town team, without a large population base or anything else – apart from its tradition – to sustain it, Oldham have been bracketed with Halifax and Castleford as the sort of clubs who have little place in the future of Super League.

"We have felt unwanted for some time," says Quinn. "But there are two ways of reacting to all this – and one is to say 'We'll show them'. We won't let them kick us out."

Edwards escapes ban

Shaun Edwards has escaped without a ban after his sending-off at Leeds last week – which means that his full debut for the Loooodoo Broncos at Salford tonight, writes Dave Hadfield.

Edwards was found guilty of aiming a forearm at an opponent but did not make contact. Thomas, a young recruit from rugby union in Worcester, would have started for the first time, with the transfer-listed Josh White out of favour.

The Bradford Bulls will collect the Stones Super League

Championship trophy after their match against Paris at Odsal tonight.

The Leeds captain, Gary Mercer, has failed in his appeal against a five-match ban for a high tackle. With Adrian Morley injured, the loose forward prospect, Kevin Sinfield, gets into the first-team squad for the first time, against Sheffield.

The game has been reassured by Chris Smith, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, that it will have full access to the planned National Academy of Sport.

Lions to tour Australia

The Lions will tour Australia in 2000 and 2008 and in return the Wallabies will make Grand Slam tours of Britain in 2000 and 2004.

The Lions will play two Tests in Australia in 2000 before travelling to New Zealand for two Tests against the All Blacks. The Lions have not toured Australia since 1989 when they won the last two Tests to take the series 2-1.

Two Lions, Allan Bateman and Barry Williams, have agreed to play for Wales against Romania in Wrexham on 30 August and for their club, Richmond, against Saracens the

next day in an Allied Dunbar Premiership match.

They were the only two of six Welsh players at Richmond to make themselves available for international duty, although Scott and Craig Quinell, John Davies and Andy Moore are all expected to play in the league match.

Another Lion, Scott Gibbs, has turned down a reported £300,000 offer to join the Allied Dunbar First Division club Northampton and will stay with Swansea.

Squads for Wales game, Digest, page 27

ling and Tim Rodber would express very different views.

There were errors of judgement on the selection front, too. Rowell was a year late in bringing De Glanville into his first-choice side and when he finally bit the bullet last season, he dropped the wrong person – Jeremy Guscott – to accommodate him. It was Carling who should have gone, but in the battle of the big egos, the glamour puss from Harlequins carried too much heavy artillery.

And what of Paul Hull, England's best player in South Africa in 1994? Rowell handled the Bristol full-back with insensitivity, wrecked his fragile confidence and ultimately cost England the services of a brilliantly instinctive, attacking footballer. Ludicrously, he showed a similar lack of sympathetic acumen by snubbing Alex King, the brightly gifted young Wasps outside-half, in favour of Rob Andrew in Cardiff last season.

But the successes far outweigh the mistakes. Under Rowell's stewardship, more than a score of new internationals have been blooded and some – Lawrence Dallaglio,

Richard Hill, Simon Shaw, Mark Regan and Tim Simpson, for instance – look the long-term part.

"A lot of work has gone into the development of this team and I'm proud of it," he said on Monday, 48 hours before piling up the drawbridge and disappearing inside Chateau Jacques for good. "You have to understand that after the '95 World Cup, we had a mountain of work to do. We weren't picking low-lying fruit, but going out on a limb to find fresh, young players capable of being moulded into Test performers. Look at the side now and you'll agree that we found quite a few."

During his days as a club coach, Rowell was food of purveying one of his more arrogant catch-phrases. "It might be good enough for England, but it's not good enough for Bath," he would inform his players as they trained under that merciless, almost reptilian gaze of his.

After the events of the last few months, he will be perfectly entitled to tell anyone who cares to listen: "It was good enough for England, but not good enough for the RFU."

Cricket Scoreboard

Britannia Assurance County Championship

Second day of first-class matches

Durham v Middlesex

Chester-le-Street: Durham (4) have scored 222 for 7 in their first innings v Middlesex (2).

Durham won toss.

Durham: 222 for 7 (100 overs).

Middlesex: 222 for 7 (100 overs).

Total (for 2, 200 overs): 444.

Umpires: D. Gurney and M. J. Kitchin.

Glamorgan v Northants

Aberystwyth: Glamorgan (4) won toss.

Glamorgan: 159 for 6 (100 overs).

Northants: 159 for 6 (100 overs).

Total (for 2, 200 overs): 318.

Umpires: J. H. Hampshire and G. Shepp.

Nottinghamshire v Essex

Worcestershire: Essex (4) have scored 440 for 7 in their first innings v Nottinghamshire (2).

Essex won toss.

Essex: 440 for 7 (100 overs).

Nottinghamshire: 440 for 7 (100 overs).

Total (for 2, 200 overs): 880.

Umpires: J. H. Hampshire and G. Shepp.

Other matches

Derbyshire: Derbyshire (4) won toss.

Derbyshire: 159 for 6 (100 overs).

Nottinghamshire: 159 for 6 (100 overs).

Total (for 2, 200 overs): 318.

Umpires: J. H. Hampshire and G. Shepp.

Warwickshire v Worcestershire

Edgbaston: Warwickshire (4) won toss.

Warwickshire: 159 for 6 (100 overs).

Worcestershire: 159 for 6 (100 overs).

Total (for 2, 200 overs): 318.

Umpires: J. H. Hampshire and G. Shepp.

Yorkshire v Sussex

Scarborough: Sussex (4) won toss.

Sussex: 159 for 6 (100 overs).

Yorkshire: 159 for 6 (100 overs).

Total (for 2, 200 overs): 318.

Umpires: J. H. Hampshire and G. Shepp.

Napier puts promising entry in the log

Cricket

JON CULLEY

reports from Worcester

Essex 440-7 v Nottinghamshire

The view from this ground is much changed from when Essex were last entertained here in the 1930s. A few yards of terrace in one corner is the only evidence of the old pit-enemy with Worksop Town FC, and where a clanking pithead once overlooked the scene the plain warehouse walls of a super-

market provide the backdrop now.

It is a curious place, with the

stewards obliged to let cars and

mobile homes drive along the

Central Avenue boundary

on their way to the trailer park

behind the pavilion, even dur-

ing play. As outgrounds go,

however, few are more shap-

able, and it is always a shame

when clubs who make an effort

to their annual jamboree hit

by the weather, as this match

was yesterday.

But if Worksop CC were

disappointed, so too was Gram-

ham Napier, a 17-year-old

making his Championship

debut for Essex hating at No

8, who may well have been

denied a half-century on his

big day when the weather

closed in two overs after lunch,

possible. Paul Prichard will

declare overnight given the

loss of so much time, leaving

Napier, playing in place of the

injured Ronnie Irani, stranded

on 35 not out.

Napier, who began the

season on a YTS contract, could

have pursued a career in foot-

ball, with Ipswich Town taking

a keen interest in his goal-

keeping skills. However, he

told Essex he preferred crick-

et and provided immediate evi-

dence of his enthusiasm here

by gathering five boundaries

and confidently smiling Chris

Tolley for six over backward

point.

Earlier, Paul Grayson

reached 44 before falling to a

catch at backward point off

Kevin Evans and Danny Law

enjoyed some good fortune in

completing his first half-cent-

ury since his move from Sus-

sex with eight fours, before his

progress was halted when he

was caught at mid-off against

Tolley.

Worcestershire stand their ground

MIKE CAREY

reports from Edgbaston

Warwickshire 252 v Worcestershire 133-2

You would have got long odds

against a side going through an

entire session without taking a

wicket on this seam bowlers'

pitch yesterday, but Warwick-

shire managed it, and inside

their dressing-room the inquest

probably went on long after play

was abandoned with only 39

overs bowled.

It would not have been the

two dropped catches that en-

abled Richard Illingworth, the

night-watcher, to progress to

an unbeaten 76 that bothered

them so much as "the catch that

wasn't" when Graeme Hick

had made 10.

A lengthy innings by Hick, with

his ability to put the loose ball

clinically away, would clearly be

crucial in what is potentially a

low scoring match: in the fourth

over of the day, he forced Doug

Brown half off the back foot

and Nick Knight, at cover, scooped

the ball up from somewhere

near his ankles and claimed what

would have been a superb catch.

Knight was immediately sur-

rounded by congratulatory

colleagues, as is fashionable

nowadays, but Hick was not so

sure and stood his ground. Um-

pire Chris Baldwin also had

his doubts, his colleague at

square leg, Barrie Meyer, was

too far away to be consulted and

so Hick stayed.

He will be there again this

morning to dig in once more

against an attack which clearly

missed the problems the extra

pace of Allan Donald, who is

unfit, would have caused on this

pitch. So will Illingworth, who

was badly missed by Keith

Piper, the wicket-keeper, off

Graeme Welch at 11, and by

David Hemple, at slip, off the

same bowler at 23.

It was Illingworth's first

Championship innings of the

season and it showed. Not too

many members of the fielding

side felt obliged to join in the

applause when he reached 50

via a thick edge for four. But

night-watchmen have always

been noted for their dogged

devotion to duty rather than

their elegance, and so far

Illingworth has frustrated War-

wickshire for 146 deliveries,

hitting 11 fours.

Silverware's shattering salvo

Round-up

Rain intervened as Sussex were

plunged towards an innings de-

feat by Yorkshire's Chris Sil-

verwood at Scarborough

yesterday. The seamer took 4

for 21 off only 6.3 overs in the

visitors' second innings before

the bad weather brought an

early end to the day's play with

Sussex still 84 short of Yorkshire's

first innings total on 41 for 6.

Yorkshire's last two wickets

had put on 94 this morning to

swell their total to 282 all out

in answer to the visitors' poor

opening effort of 157. Then Sil-

verwood removed Sussex's

Rajesh Rao, Neil Taylor, Keith

Newell and Peter Moores.

Dominic Cork picked up a

warning for bowling short-

pitched deliveries during the

second day of Derbyshire's rain-

affected match against Leices-

tershire at Grace Road.

Cork, who had a hernia op-

eration earlier in the season,

managed only 1 for 120 off his

25 overs, sent down 14 no balls

and was warned by the umpire,

John Hampshire, for bowling

The history maker

Alex Greaves takes women to new heights in racing, page 25

sport

Victim of parlour politics

Chris Hewett on the rugby legacy of Jack Rowell, page 26

SIXTH TEST: England's batsmen find weird and not very wonderful ways of dismissal as Australia gain advantage again

Rampant McGrath wreaks havoc

DEREK PRINGLE

reports from The Oval
England 180; Australia 77-2

For those who thought England's batting could not get any worse, The Oval provided a new benchmark yesterday, as the home side were bowled out for 180 on a blameless pitch as Glenn McGrath took 7 for 76. Indeed, so poor was it that they are not so much a team in need of inspiration as evolution, and they will need to become veritable before they can hope to compete with the likes of Australia in the future.

If one final straw was needed to dislodge Michael Atherton from retaining the England captaincy, then this was it and, though he was undoubtedly, he cannot surely have the stomach to captain a side whose collapses are now more frequent than a faulty deckchair.

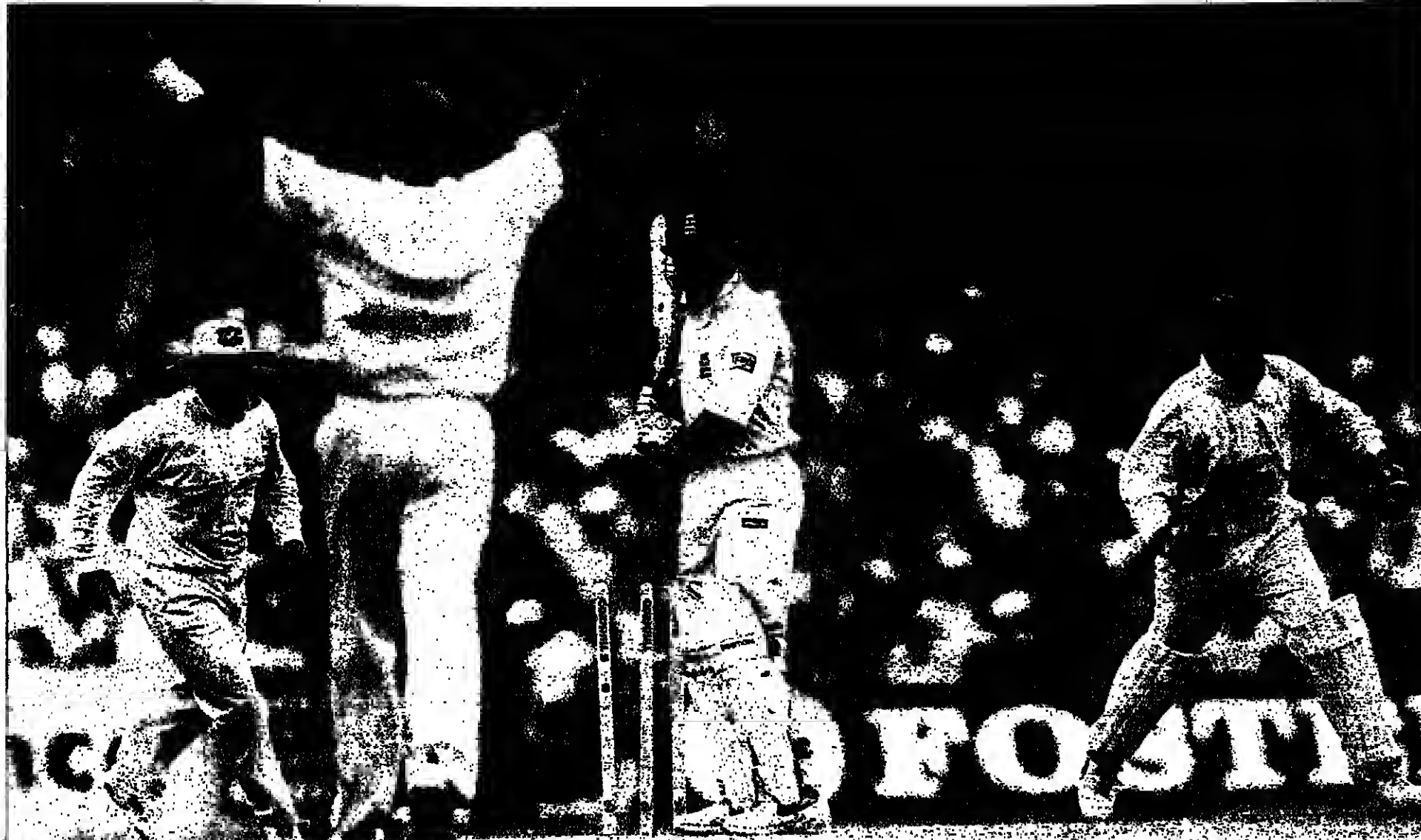
Capitulation on this scale has become something of a speciality for Atherton's men this series, and this was their sixth score of 200 or less of the summer. It has also become too symptomatic of just how far off as one of those things.

To lose eight wickets for 83 runs in 26 overs, as England did yesterday afternoon, is carelessness bordering on the negligent. The tourists may be a superior force, but England played with the reckless abandon of an end-of-term party.

So much for the empty rhetoric about having plenty to play for. If David Lloyd gave his side a verbal carpeting after Trent Bridge, then the real firework display should have been in full flow last night.

England's coach must now be close to reaching the end of his tether too. If there was a mitigating circumstance after Atherton had won his first Test of the summer, it was that McGrath bowled exceptionally well. He is the complete fast bowler, not West Indian express, but quick enough and with enough control and movement to create the kind of pressure that the majority of England's batsmen seem quite unable to cope with.

To date he has taken 36 wickets in the series and now needs another six in England's second innings to equal Terry Alderman's Ashes record of 42 wickets set in 1981.



The Australians celebrate as England's Adam Hobbie stands motionless after being clean bowled by Shane Warne without playing a shot

Photograph: David Ashdown

man's Ashes record of 42 wickets set in 1981. Bowling exclusively from the Vauxhall End, the skinny New South Welshman removed Mark Butcher in the fifth over of the day, the Surrey opener dragging a wide long-hop on to the base of leg-stump.

Two overs later, Atherton himself followed, the victim of a delivery that cut back sharply off the pitch to take the inside edge and provide Ian Healy with his 25th catch of the series.

The captaincy issue cannot be helping matters — but while Atherton's batting average as captain is far higher than his

average before he came to take charge (45.35 as compared to 41.15), it is different against Australia, where it remains just above 35 in each category.

At 26.38, Alec Stewart's average is significantly lower, and Australia remain the one side he has never scored a Test century against. If he was to break that particular duck, however, nowhere would have been better than his beloved Oval, the place whose pitches are entirely responsible for his languid strokeplay. Once again he set off like a train, taking boundaries as easily as the local pickpockets might lift a wallet from a

weary commuter at the tube station down the road.

With Nasser Hussain using his bat more as a fly swat than something with which to make contact with a cricket ball, England were perhaps fortunate to add the 73 runs they did for the third wicket. But, just as a high score looked possible for both Stewart and England, the Surrey man was adjudged lbw to the first ball he faced after lunch. Having been stuck on 35 for over 20 minutes, Hussain eventually lost the battle of wills, as he tamely drove McGrath to mid-on where Matthew Elliott took a smart diving catch.

It was the dismissal that proved to be the catalyst for collapse, as Graham Thorpe, defying all known geometry, was bowled round his legs. It was a soft dismissal but it paled beside the one that followed an over later, when Adam Hobbie calmly watched a Shane Warne leg-break crash unchallenged into his middle and off stumps.

It was a humiliating way to go, though Hobbie can consider himself unlucky, for he picked the delivery correctly. Unfortunately for him, the ball did not grip the surface and turn, as previous deliveries had, and Warne's reputation for making

batsmen look like fools was further enhanced.

With a career to resurrect, Mark Ramprakash would have been full of nerves and expectation. After squaring his first ball for two to square leg, the conflicting emotions appeared to cancel each other out. Or at least they did until McGrath got one to cut back and bounce and find its way into the hands of Greg Blewett at short leg.

It was a desperately unfortunate way to go and, as England's tail wagged merrily for once, Ramprakash will feel that his Test career may be highlighted by means beyond his control.

When Australia batted, the contest looked as if it was being played on another level as eight boundaries were taken from England's first eight overs. Then Phil Tufnell, bowling his first Test match deliveries on home soil for three years, removed both left-handers.

On the day that Oasis released their eagerly awaited record "Be Here Now", Tufnell's wickets did not provide the succour England need to finish this series on a positive note. In fact England's batsmen, most of them Oasis fans, would rather have been anywhere else.

County cricket, page 26

Lloyd angered by lack of survival instinct

DAVID LLEWELLYN

So England's headless chickens came home to roost — again. Commendable though Glenn McGrath's seven-wicket haul was, there was no shortage of belpers. England's batsmen obliged at every opportunity. Gone, it seems are the days of true grit. Bailey the Barnacle, Boycott who only gave up his wicket with extreme reluctance,

or Tavaré, who took root. In their place are young guns too often firing from the hip without thought for survival.

"There were lads out there chasing the ball," said an incredulous David Lloyd, the England coach. "That smacks of a lack of confidence to me. What was needed was to stay there, extend the batting into the second day. But the big worry for me is once again we were blown away."

Sadly, those capable of hanging around, notably Michael Atherton and Alec Stewart, did not, nor did opener Mark Butcher. While the stars formerly known as the Brat Pack — as Thorpe, Hussain and Ramprakash were dubbed when they first appeared on the Test scene — left the ship sinking. The anchorman, Stewart, went shortly after lunch and so, with the captain already overboard, all that stood between England and utter humiliation was a straggly tail.

Lloyd admitted he had to strike a balance between crushing what little confidence may be left when, on paper at least, four more days remain in which England can try to salvage something. "I agonised about whether to, but in the end..."

Lloyd trailed off. "They have let down the captain and myself badly. They have let themselves down as well. I am bitterly disappointed with today's performance, and frustrated."

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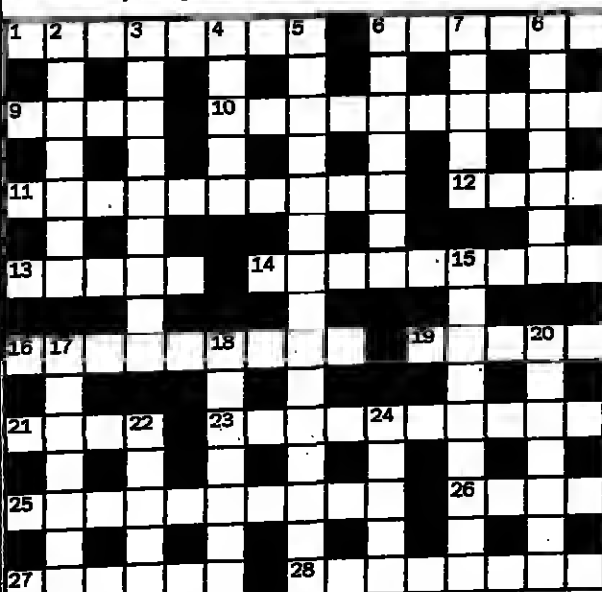
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THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3384 Friday 22 August

By Phil

Thursday's solution



POPULAR RIVALS
O L N E I T R V
R O U T S R I G M A R O L E
S H O R E I R U R
T I G
S T R O M T A R A N T U L A
A M E A G N
P O P U L A R S W A M P
U
N E V E R O C C A T I O N
S I T I S E M A E F
U N S T A C K L E V I R G O
I D L K C E E R
T O R I P E O K I N G D O M

ACROSS

- 1 A swinger dancing nude, wrapped in purple (8)
- 6 First entrants in hall wantonly tucked into food — that's a blow! (6)
- 9 Cleaning lady's less-than-total glamour (4)
- 10 Siren in amazingly cut dress (10)
- 11 Fail to train absconding actor? (4,6,3)
- 12 Intermittent supply of water finally obscured grave inscription (4)
- 13 and 16 Totally hooked on particular millinery? (4,1,6,3)
- 14 and 19 Refuses to be seduced by quiet bees — difficult to understand (5,4,2,3)
- 16 See 13
- 19 See 14

DOWN

- 2 English against adopting mostly fixed arrangement of troops (7)
- 3 What you get from laughing at someone who's fallen in the mud? (5,4)
- 4 A bit of steel found in upturned concrete beam (5)
- 5 Smoker will leave this — objection refused! (4)
- 23 Something offensive — horrible spiders etc. (10)
- 25 Backroom chief is someone with no real power (10)
- 26 I almost stand up for the flag (4)
- 27 Girl's very pleased, certainly giving heart away (6)
- 28 Priest wavering, say, keeping back worldly status (8)

- 5 Removed the spot and cleared out (4,1,5,5)
- 6 Volunteers left in town without comment? (7)
- 7 Promise to take in opening of London Globe (5)
- 8 One handing out money — perhaps almost throws in a vehicle (7)
- 15 Beast's track a clue containing doubtful proof (4-5)
- 17 Old train crashed on line being tested (2,5)
- 18 Work with 500 jewels — fair smashers! (7)
- 20 Artwork: attractive, but not fine (7)
- 22 Required to jump perimeter (5)
- 24 Chap's to yearn to follow Editor (5)

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United deny move for João Pinto

Football

According to press reports in Portugal, hard-up Benfica are considering selling their international striker, João Pinto, to either Manchester United or Rangers.

United's assistant secretary, Ken Ramsden, however, denied that they wanted to sign the 26-year-old, saying "there's absolutely no truth in this story."

Rangers have no comment. Benfica are already believed to have received an offer in the region of £11.5m from the Spanish side Deportivo la Coruña.

Doncaster Rovers have parted company with their player-manager, Kerry Dixon. Administrators in charge at the financially troubled Third Division club said that Dixon had agreed to leave by "mutual consent."

Everton's attempt to sign Dean Saunders from Nottingham Forest has failed because the clubs could not agree on a fee. Howard Kendall, Everton's manager, said they were not prepared to meet Forest's asking price of £1m for the 33-year-old striker. Forest have signed Dave Beasant on loan from Southampton — the 38-year-old goalkeeper will make his debut at Oxford United tomorrow.

Blackburn's goalkeeping worries worsened when Michael Watt, who is on loan from Aberdeen, suffered a suspected broken jaw when he collided with a team-mate. Tore Pedersen, in a reserve game on Wednesday, Rovers have just one fit keeper, John Flan.

Woodward favourite for Rowell job

Rugby Union
CHRIS HEWETT

Ian McGeechan obviously started a trend when he turned down the chance to coach England through to the next World Cup in just over two years' time. Yesterday, Richard Hill and Bob Dwyer revealed that they too found the appeal of the Twickenham hot seat less than irresistible and promised instead to keep faith with their respective clubs, Gloucester and Leicester.

There were, however, intriguing indications from Rugby Football Union insiders that Clive Woodward, the former England centre and current Bath coach, might head a pecking order that is shortening

drastically by the day. Woodward insisted earlier this week that he had not been approached, but Bill Beaumont, the new chairman of the national playing committee, confirmed yesterday morning that contact had now been made.

One appointment does look to have been all but finalised in the wake of Jack Rowell's decision to step down as coach after three and a half years in the front line. Roger Utley, who played alongside Rowell at Gosforth in the mid-1970s, is set to adopt a managerial role designed to take at least some of the strain and pressure from the shoulders of the new coach.

A combination of Utley and Woodward would not, on the face of it, be a bad thing. Woodward has emerged over the last

couple of seasons as the most imaginative and adventurous of the younger generation of top-flight coaches, while Utley's hard-bitten pragmatism was an important factor behind England's compelling march to the World Cup final in 1991.

Yesterday, both Hill and Dwyer ruled themselves out of contention for the No 1 post by citing club commitments. "I have made it clear that my duties to Gloucester must come first," Hill said. "There is no chance of my taking a full-time role with England, although the club are happy for me to continue my coaching with England A."

Meanwhile, McGeechan confessed that his decision to reject overtures from Fran Cotton, the vice-chairman of the RFU's

management board, had been the most agonising of his rugby career. "All in all it was very difficult, very confusing and I might well regret it," he said during a rugby broadcast on Sky TV.

The former Scotland coach flatly rebuffed reports that his links north of the border persuaded him to spike the England option and stay with Northampton. "I was very close to a lot of Scottish players but ultimately, it wasn't the reason I didn't put my name forward. I think that in the professional game, you will get international coaches moving around. There were all sorts of other things in the equation; if it was all black and white, it would have been easy."

Rowell political victim, page 26

Ballesteros bothered by timing troubles

Golf

ANDY FARRELL
reports from Straffan, Co Kildare

Bedecked by the ravages of jet-lag and having breakfasted to the gay sight of English wickets tumbling at The Oval, Colin Montgomerie roused himself to set a new course record, an eight-under-par 64, at the K Club.

Montgomerie led by one from Steven Richardson and the Swede Niclas Fasth, whose name only had to appear on the leaderboard for slow play to once again become an issue, as it did at Loch Lomond during the World Invitational. The feeling then was the tour was not doing enough.

Application of the same reg-

ulation yesterday angered one of the tour's bigger fish, the Ryder Cup captain. "It was like we were being humiliated," said Seve Ballesteros. "It is not normal to have three referees timing you. There were two referees just on one par-three."

Ballesteros's threeball, which also included the defending champion, Per-Ulrik Johansson, and the Dubliner Padraig Harrington, was first warned on their front nine. But by the time they came off the first green (their 10th), they were 15 minutes behind schedule and Andy McFee, the tournament director, put them on the clock again.

The only bad timing came from Ballesteros on the fifth tee. He took 64 seconds instead of

the 50 he was allowed. By now McFee had been called to another group and an assistant, Miguel Vidar, had to give Ballesteros the news that one more bad time would mean a £500 fine and a one-stroke penalty.

McFee returned to greet Ballesteros at the fifth green and got an earful. Ballesteros's contention was that their group had a large gallery, and that the significance of the occasion for Harrington, who is trying to make the Ryder Cup team, and Johansson, whose place is not absolutely assured, should be taken into account.

"The whole group were affected," Ballesteros, who shot a 73, said. "I three-putted and Harrington and Johansson both

missed short putts. We all lost rhythm after that." They came off the clock with three holes to play, but lost 10 minutes in that time. Their four hours and 38 minutes for the round was 18 minutes over schedule.

"It is my job to draw the line somewhere," McFee said. "It actually helps the group in front for a threeball like Seve's to be two or three minutes over, but there is a limit."

Terry Coates, who threatened to resign as chief executive of the Women's European Tour after an AGM in May turned into what he described as a "bear-pit", is to step down as soon as a successor can be found.

European Open scores, Digest, page 27

Magnus Magnusson: The pass master the long weekend

England bungle their daring daylight robbery

From the West Coast Correspondent: Jason Bennett (Crime Correspondent) reports from the Sixth Test at The Oval

When the prospect of a new cricket test was first mooted, it was seen as a chance to bring the game back to the heart of the nation. But now, with the test series in its final stages, it is clear that the game is still a long way from being a national pastime.

England's batsmen have been in a state of collapse since the start of the series. They have lost eight wickets for 83 runs in 26 overs, a performance that has left the home side in a state of despair. The tourists, on the other hand, have been in a state of triumph, leading by a large margin.

The former Scotland coach flatly rebuffed reports that his links north of the border persuaded him to spike the England option and stay with Northampton. "I was very close to a lot of Scottish players but ultimately, it wasn't the reason I didn't put my name forward."

Meanwhile, McGeechan confessed that his decision to reject overtures from Fran Cotton, the vice-chairman of the RFU's management board, had been the most agonising of his rugby career. "All in all it was very difficult, very confusing and I might well regret it."

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